FRANKFORD (PREPARATIVE) FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE
Corner of Unity and Walnut Streets
Philadelphia
Philadelphia County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-6652

HABS
PA-6652

WRITTEN HISTORICAL & DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS
PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

FRANKFORD (PREPARATIVE) FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE

HABS NO. PA-6652

Location: Corner of Unity and ~~Waln~~ Walnut streets, Frankford Borough, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Owner: Trustees of the Frankford Meeting of the Society of Friends

Present Use: Meeting for Worship; with an addition to house school rooms (used by contractor)

Significance: The original portion of the Frankford Preparative Friends Meeting House was erected in 1775-76, making it the oldest Friends meeting house in Philadelphia. Although the construction of meeting houses within the city dates back to its founding in 1680s, most were replaced by the nineteenth century and some more than once. Frankford Meeting House was erected as a single-cell, three-bay-by-two-bay structure, to which a smaller two-bay-wide section was added to better accommodate the growing meeting. The addition also enabled the structure to adapt to a programmatic change that occurred during the late eighteenth century.

Evidence indicates that a partition located to the east of the central doorway once divided the 1775-76 structure into two apartments. The smaller size of the eastern (women's) apartment reflected the English program whereby Friends met in a single room for worship, and then in separate apartments for gender-specific business meetings. By the late eighteenth century, American Friends began meeting on separate sides of a partition for worship *and* business, lowering the partition for the latter meetings. The new arrangement required two equally sized apartments, and led to the development of the two-cell, *doubled* structure that became a standard for Friends meeting house design for nearly a century. Frankford's 1811-12 addition made the meeting house conform to the newer program by creating same-sized rooms. Thus, Frankford reflects a critical point in the evolution of meeting house design. It is one of the few surviving examples of an one-cell form altered to better accommodate separate space for women's meetings.

Frankford Meeting House is also of interest for its unusual mix of building materials. A refined treatment of Flemish-bond brick with glazed headers was used in constructing the facades facing the street. The use of locally quarried rubble stone gives a more vernacular appearance to the two remaining facades, including the south front. The utilization of both brick and stone was probably a function of economy. The materials from the previous meeting house were reused, thus minimizing the need for additional (more costly) brick. Such building practices were indicative of Quaker thrift. Salvaged materials often found new life in another structure or where otherwise put to use.

Historian: Catherine C. Lavoie, 1999

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1775-76. The Friends from Oxford Meeting (later renamed Frankford) first applied for "assistance for the Rebuilding (of) their mtg House" on the January 30, 1775.[1] It was not until February of the next year, however, that the monthly meeting reported the collection of subscriptions towards the construction of the new building was completed.[2] The date stone indicates that construction began in 1775, and the records of the Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting reported that it was completed in August 1776. According to the minutes of the Frankford Preparative Meeting, the eastern portion of the meeting house was added between 1811 and 1812. In January 1812, the subscriptions for the building project were collected, and the work was to be completed "as soon as the season would permit."[3]

2. Architect: There is no known architect or master builder for the meeting house. The design most likely was derived by the members of the meeting themselves, perhaps with assistance from the Abington Monthly or Philadelphia Quarterly meetings of which Frankford was a part. As was common practice at that time, selected members were appointed to a building committee to determine proper form and to oversee the construction of the meeting house.

3. Owners: The property on which the meeting house and accompanying burying ground rests has been owned by the Frankford Friends since 1684.[4] Title has been held by various members as trustees for the meeting. The original deed conveyed one acre and 96 perches from Thomas Fairman to trustees Joseph Paul and John Worrell. It has passed through various deeds (the new conveyance generally preceding a new deed of trust). An adjoining parcel was acquired in 1773. A portion of the property to the east of the meeting house was sold around the turn of the century, and houses erected upon it.

---

[1] Abington Monthly Meeting, Minutes, 30th day of the 1st month 1775.

[2] Ibid., 26th day of the 2nd month of 1776.

[3] Frankford Preparative Meeting, Minutes, 21st 1st month 1812.

[4] Thomas Fairman gave the property to his fellow Friends when the first meeting house was erected in 1684, but it was not properly recorded until the 4th day of the 12th month 1698. It may have been the desire to erect a new house that prompted the Friends to obtain legal title. *A note on dates*: except when quoted and in the footnotes, the report translates the "Scriptural" (i.e., numerical) names of months favored by Friends into the more common names. According to the Julian calendar in use before 1752, the year began in March. Within the text of the report, the pre-1752 dates have been converted to their modern equivalents. No attempt has been made to confirm the modernization of dates derived from secondary sources, however.

4. Builders, contractors, suppliers: There is no extant information as to who actually built the meeting house. As was then the practice among Friends, a building committee probably was formed to oversee the construction process. The only clues given within the Preparative Meeting minutes are that James Tyson and William Ashbridge were appointed in January 1774 to attend the monthly meeting and to request advice as to how best to repair their meeting house.[5] In April 1775, Jacob Kirknor was appointed to collect subscriptions towards the construction of the meeting house, and in June, James Tyson and Isiah Worrell (in the place of Ashbridge, now deceased) were once again selected to attend the monthly meeting and request financial assistance. Having served on this planning committee, these men also may have been part of a building committee.

5. Original plans and construction: Frankford Preparative Meeting was erected as a single-cell, three-bay long by two-bay deep structure with entries to the west, south and east elevations. The meeting house was built in a combination of Flemish-bond brick with glazed headers and rubble stone, with the north (rear) and west (end) being of the more ornamental brick. The reason for the variation in building materials is not known. It is worth noting that the fancier brick facades are those visible from the street, while the rubble stonework faces the burying ground. It may be that the intention was to create a more stylish outward appearance while at the same time minimizing cost. Most likely, the materials from the previous meeting house were used in the construction of the current building. The salvaged materials were supplemented with those needed to enlarge the structure. This may explain the use of the term "rebuild(ing)" which appears repeatedly in the minutes with regard to the construction of the current meeting house.[6]

The three-bay structure was partitioned into two interior apartments to allow for separate men's and women's business meetings; if not initially divided as such, it was done by the late eighteenth century. The women's business meeting was held in the smaller eastern apartment, which was located closest to the former privy and the mounting block. The separate apartments also may account for the prominent western end entryway, which may have provided entry into a gender specific meeting room. While the structure technically faces south, as was the tradition upheld by the vast majority of meeting houses, the west entry in the Flemish-bond-brick gable end provides a "street front." Also in the western end is the fireplace which may have been the only heat source for the meeting house, and the stairway to the "loft."

---

[5] Oxford Preparative Meeting, Minutes, 1st month 25th day 1774.

[6] Almost without exception, the urban meeting houses, those located within the bounds of the city of Philadelphia, were made of brick, while their "country" counterparts were made of rubble stone. The seemingly pretentious brick facades of Frankford Meeting House might also have been constructed in an effort to blend with the indigenous (brick) building stock.

6. Changes and additions: Between 1811 and 1812, an addition was made to the east end of the meeting house. The addition likely was made to accommodate an increased membership, and separate meetings for business. The two-bay-by-two-bay addition supposedly was built using materials salvaged from the east end wall of the original building. In order to blend with the original structure, brick was used for the north facade of the addition, and stone, in the south front and east end. The seams are clearly visible in the masonry work. The south front doorway in the original section appears to have been reduced in size, perhaps to conform to the size of the corresponding doorway in the addition.

A single-story brick addition was made to the east end of the meeting house in 1947. The addition was designed by architects Heacock & Platt. It included a classroom, kitchen, and men's and women's restrooms (replacing the former privy). It was joined to the meeting house through a hallway located at the former side entrance. In 1962, a second addition was made to the northern end of the 1947 addition to accommodate more classrooms and a larger kitchen facility. The kitchen in the first addition was removed and the restroom facilities were enlarged.

B. Historical Context:

Brief History of (Oxford) Frankford Preparative Meeting & Its Early Houses

The Frankford Preparative Meeting is among the oldest Friends meetings in the Philadelphia region. Its roots can be traced to the establishment of the very first meeting in the Pennsylvania Colony, originating at Shackamaxon (currently in the Kensington neighborhood of Philadelphia) prior to the arrival of Governor William Penn. The Shackamaxon Meeting was held in the home of Thomas Fairman. Upon his arrival, Penn directed Fairman to relocate and establish a new meeting at Tackoney (also spelled Tacony or Tookany) in Oxford Township. In exchange for this, Fairman was offered a sizable land grant, and he left his former home to William Penn. These events are recorded by the Abington Monthly Meeting of 1682:

> At this time Governor William Penn and a multitude of Friends arrived here and erected a city called Philadelphia, about half a mile from Shackamaxon, where meetings were established.... At this time Thomas Fairman, at the request of the Governor, removed himself and family to Tackony where there was also a meeting appointed to be kept, and the ancient meeting at Shackamaxon removed Philadelphia (becoming the Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting) from which meeting all other meetings were appointed in the province of Pennsylvania.[7]

---

[7] Abington Quarterly Meeting, Minutes 9th month 8th 1682; as cited in Walter Brinton, "Friends Meetings in Frankford," *Papers Read before The Historical Society of Frankford*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (1914): 128.

Under Fairman's guidance, Friends in Tackoney first gathered for worship at the home of Sarah Seary.[8] In August 1683, the Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting established an official "first-day" (Sunday) meetings for worship at Tacony and at Poetquesink (later becomes Byberry). Together, the two formed a monthly meeting. Thomas Fairman gave a parcel of land to erect a meeting house (the same lot upon which the current house stands).[9] By May 1684, meetings were held in a newly erected log meeting house.[10] The name of the Tackoney Meeting was changed to Oxford in 1685 to more accurately reflect its location. As the minutes of the Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting record, "Friends appearing for Tackoney meeting [...] acquainted this meeting that their meeting house doth not stand in Tackoney, neither is there any frds (Friends) in Tackoney that are members of it; But the land on which it stands is and the frds adjoining live in Oxferd [sic.] Township; Therefore the Meeting doth think that itt [sic.] be called Oxferd Meeting."[11]

By November 1699, the Oxford Friends "complained of the want of a new meeting house," probably due to increased membership. The monthly meeting directed them "to consult together in order to make plans for this building."[12] This is the earliest known reference to the (second or) first brick meeting house. Another reference is made to a "brick house" on the property in 1704, which is the popularly accepted date for the construction.[13] The indulged meeting for worship at Oxford had been made a preparative meeting in January of 1702.[14] This designation may have prompted the construction of a more permanent meeting house, as an indication of their commitment to "truth."

The 1775-76 Frankford Preparative Meeting House

---

[8] This was indicated in the early minutes.

[9] Unclear title lead to the "purchase" of the property from Fairman, and the recording of a deed to the trustees of the meeting in 1698.

[10] On the 5th day of the 3rd month 1684 the minutes recorded, "At a monthly Meeting at the new meeting house at Oxford." All previous meetings were recorded as being held at "the house of Sarah Searly." According to the Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting, they were gathering in a meeting house that was not completed. The Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting minutes for the 6th day of the 10th month 1686 recorded that the Oxford Friends cannot pay their subscriptions towards the erected of Center meeting house because "They have a meeting house of their own going forward, and themselves scarcely able to finish it."

[11] 1st day 4th month 1685.

[12] Pennsylvania Historical Survey, Division of Community Service Programs, Work Projects Administration. *Inventory of Church Archives, Society of Friends in Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Friends Historical Association, 1941), 153.

[13] Ibid., 153, citing a June 1704 deed conveying the meeting house property to its trustees and stating: "....1 acre and 96 perches in Oxford Township, together with the brick house thereon...."

[14] Recorded during the 11th month of 1701.

Seventy years later, a replacement of the ca. 1704 meeting house at Oxford first was discussed.[15] In January 1774, the meeting appointed James Tyson and William Ashbridge to represent them at the Abington Monthly Meeting. They were supposed to "request the Mgs (meetings) advise and assistance in repairing our meeting house which is mutch (sic.) out of repair."[16] By early 1775, the decision to build a new house instead of repair the old one had been made and a subscription to finance the work was written. In April, Jacob Kirknor was asked to assist in collecting the money that had been subscribed for the construction of the new meeting house. And in June, James Tyson and Isiah Worrell are appointed to request from the monthly meeting funds towards its construction. The minutes for the Abington Monthly Meeting recorded Oxford plea and Abington's response, "Oxford frds (Friends) informs this mg (meeting) that they stand of need of some money for their assistance in rebuilding their mg house, each preparative mg is therefore desired to pay in their collections as soon as may be to the treasurer, in order that he may hand to their assistance as occasion may require."[17]

Little account of the design or construction process is given within the extant records. Historians have suggested that materials from the ca. 1704 meeting house were used in the construction of the proceeding house. It was in keeping with Friends values to reuse older buildings for other purposes, or to salvage their parts. While the accounts of the Building Committee were not found, the general account book for 1775 lists the sale of building materials "belonging to our meeting house" such as wood, old hinges, doors and shutters, and "old scantling."[18] The fact that no brick or stone is listed supports the claim that those materials were reused rather than sold. In any event, the construction process appears to have preceded without incident, based upon the timeliness of its execution. By the end of February 1776, the monthly meeting reported that "the collection towards the rebuild(in)g Oxford Mg House is compleated (sic.)"[19] The minutes for the Oxford Preparative Meeting make no mention of the completion of the new house. In August 1776, however, in answer to the annual query concerning new meetings settled or meeting houses built within their jurisdiction, the Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting responded with "The meeting house at Oxford in the compass of Abington Monthly Meeting hath been rebuilt; otherwise no new meeting houses built or new meetings settled."[20]

---

[15] Oxford (Frankford) Preparative Meeting, Minutes, 25th day of the 1st month 1774.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Abington Monthly Meeting, Minutes, 26th day 6th month 1775.

[18] Oxford No. 1, Preparative Meeting Book, (beginning) 5th month 19th 1772 (accounts included in the back of the book). With regard to the use of the word "scantling," Webster's Dictionary definitions include, the dimension of stone or timber used in building, and a small piece of lumber.

[19] Ibid., 26th day 2nd month 1776. The reuse of materials from the old meeting house might have warranted the term "rebuilding" with reference to the construction of the new meeting house.

[20] Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting, Minutes, 8th month 1776.

Thus, by August of 1776, the three-bay-by-two-bay meeting house was ready for use. The interior originally may have consisted of a single open room (as suggested by its single-celled exterior appearance). By 1790s, the interior of the meeting house was partitioned into two separate apartments to allow for separate men's and women's business meetings. Evidence of the partition appear in passing references within the Oxford Preparative Meeting minutes. On February 16, 1790 it was recorded that "the extracts from our last Yearly Meeting were again read *before the Men and Women separated.*" And later that year, reference is made to altering the *women's* seats. More conclusive evidence is provided in the minutes for the 24th of October 1797, which stated, "Our stove having been found not to make the meeting house sufficintly (sic) comfortable in cold weather, it is concluded to sell it and to purchase two new ones, and have them put up *one in each apartment* [...] as soon as convenient."[21] A dutchmen in the east-west running beam along the north wall indicates that the partition was located to the east of the south (front) doorway of the original section. This suggests that approximately two-thirds of the interior was given up to the western apartment, with the remaining third lying to the east of the partition. The eastern section was most likely used by the women's meeting, due to its proximity to a former privy and the original location of the mounting block.[22] The unequal division of the interior space conforms to the early English practice whereby the men and women met together for worship and separated for business meetings. This arrangement dictated that the apartment used for joint worship be roughly twice the size of that used for separate business meetings by either the men or women of the meeting.

Other features of the original meeting house include a fireplace in the western end.[23] By 1790, the fireplace was supplemented by a stove. Yeamens Gillingham, the caretaker, brings account to the meeting for andirons, a shovel and tongs during February 1797, suggesting that the fireplace, still in use at that time. Wood for the fire was stored in the "loft" above. The minutes also call for walls to be whitewashed and the floors to be cleaned.

The minutes also provide clues regarding the routine care and maintenance of the meeting house. At Frankford, tasks such as providing general maintenance, whitewashing the interior, and lighting fires to warm the house before meeting, were the responsibility of the caretaker. Joseph Worrell appears to have been the first caretaker of the new meeting house. He was replaced by Benjamin Love by the mid-1780s. Besides the caretaker, other members of the meeting lent a hand with more substantial repairs. In May 1783, "the repairing (of) our meeting house and stable" was again considered. Leonard Shalleross, Jacob Kirkner and Robert Harper were asked

---

[21] Frankford Preparative Meeting, Minutes, (book) No. 2, 1794-1820; 10th day 24th month 1797.

[22] Also, the preparative minutes record on the 20th day of the 10th month 1801 a request to have "a vernician (sic) blind made for the southeast window of this house." Unless it was a replacement, the request for a single blind in this location would suggest that the sun was shining into the women's meeting room, disrupting them during their business meeting.

[23] If there was a fireplace on the flanking east wall, it was removed when the addition was made in 1811-12. At that time, a stack for the use of a stove was built.

to "take the necessary care to get it done."[24] The work, including the repair of the meeting house windows,[25] was completed the following November 1783. [26] Jacob Kirknor and R. Morris were paid for carpentry work and Josiah Worrell "on account for repairs."[27] Robert Harper replaced Benjamin Love as caretaker in March 1792, although he continued to make repairs, including those made to the grave yard wall and the "window shutters of this house" in 1795. Some changes and repairs are again made in 1803-05, following the suggestions of a committee appointed to "take into consideration what mode of alteration is necessary about the meeting house."[28] It was decided that the end of the meeting house needed whitewashing (probably the east end near the privy which appears to be white-washed in Gilbert Cope's 1893 photo), and that "a sufficient quantity of [hitching?] posts near the door, and a new necessary would be useful." In 1805, repairs were made to the necessary, some of the benches widened (for comfort), and the meeting house (interior) whitewashed and cleaned.[29]

In August 1805, the Oxford Preparative Meeting united in the decision to change the name of the meeting to Frankford.[30] This was done in response to the growth of the surrounding village. The Borough of Frankford was established officially a few months prior to their own name change. The area had grown from a small settlement of farms and mills along the creek to a bustling town and important industrial area. Located along the "King's Highway," Frankford was the first stage stop outside the city of Philadelphia, which helped to fuel its growth.

By October 1811, an addition to the meeting house was planned, an indication of the meeting's increasing size. The preparative meeting minutes stated, "This meeting taking into consideration a plan of enlarging this house are united in judgement it will be best, to add twenty feet to the east end."[31] Benjamin Love, Joseph Woollens, Robert Harper and Joel Woolman were appointed to draw up the subscription papers and to solicit subscriptions. Construction began soon thereafter. By January 1812, it was reported that "a sufficient sum raised to compleat [sic.] the building witch (sic.) this meeting unites with and appoints the following Friend(s) a building

---

[24] Frankford Preparative Meeting, Minutes, 20th day of the 5th month 1783.

[25] Oxford Preparative Meeting, Minutes, 20th day 5th month, and 19th day 8th month, 1783.

[26] Ibid., 18th day 11th month 1783, and the 17th day 2nd month 1784. The accounts totaling 13 pounds, 19 shillings and 7 pence, were settled during the 2nd month 1784

[27] Ibid., accounts in back of minute book; entered on the 22nd day of the 3rd month 1784.

[28] Frankford Preparative Meeting, Minutes, 24th day of the 5th month 1803.

[29] Ibid., 21st day of 5th month, and 23rd day of 7th month 1805.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid., 22nd day of the 10th month 1811.

committee to go on with it as soon as the season will permit (it) to viz.: Nathan Harper, Benjamin Love, Yeamens Gillingham, Joseph Woollens, Robert Harper, John Comley, Joel Woolman, John Waterman and Isaac Whitlock."[32] There is no further account of the design or construction process. In another incident, many of the same individuals were asked to "conclude upon a plan" for the construction of carriage sheds and stable buildings. This situation suggests that design, as well as construction and repair, was accomplished by a committee of members of the meeting.[33]

Due to an increase in the numbers of Friends within the Abington Monthly Meeting, a division occurred in 1815. Germantown and Frankford preparative meetings joined to form a new monthly meeting, named for the latter meeting; the union that lasted until 1906. This division enabled the old Abington and new Frankford monthly meetings to better attend to their members by reducing the number they were required to oversee. Following the 1827 schism that divided the Friends of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting into Hicksite and Orthodox factions, most of the Frankford Friends became Hicksite. As the majority population, the Hicksites were able to retain the meeting house property. The Orthodox Friends met in members' homes until a lot was purchased and a meeting house erected in 1833. The frame structure still stands on the corner of Orthodox and Penn streets, not far from the 1776 meeting house. Due to dwindling numbers, Frankford (Hicksite) Preparative Meeting was laid down on November 21, 1928. There was renewed interest in the meeting within a few years, however. In 1930, the *Friend's Intelligencer* wrote, "a few consecrated Friends held on and were able to interest others, and now the committee of oversight is much encouraged at the very much increased attendance at meetings..."[34] Frankford continued as an indulged meeting under the care of Green Street Monthly Meeting. The Frankford Meeting continued to wax and wane over the years. The school wing was built during a period of revival in the early 1960s. After a period of relative dormancy, Frankford Meeting once again is experiencing renewed vitality. It recently was reinstated as a monthly meeting. Along with its rebirth comes a new name; it is now to be referred to as United Friends Meeting, Frankford.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: Built in 1775-76, Frankford Meeting House is the oldest standing meeting house within the current limits of the city of Philadelphia. When it was built, however, it was located miles from the city. Perhaps as a result, its design

---

[32] Ibid., 21st day of the 1st month 1812 .

[33] Oxford Preparative Meeting, Minutes, 23rd day 12th month 1800, and 20th day 2nd month 1816.

[34] Friends Intelligercer (Spring 1930); as cited in Chalkley T. Matlack. "Brief Historical Sketches concerning Friends' Meetings of the Past and Present with special reference to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting." (Moorestown, N.J., Compiled 1938), 474.

embodies a small, single-cell country meeting house of the early settlement period instead of more urban prototypes. The combined use of Flemish-bond brick and rubble stone suggests a dichotomy between Frankford's rural roots and the rising urbanism at the time of its construction in 1775-76. The vernacular, stone construction (appearing on the south front facing the burying ground) typifies the rural meeting house, while the Flemish-bond brick with glazed headers (appearing on those facades facing the street) expresses a refinement generally found in urban Philadelphia. Probably combined in the interest of economy, the use of two different building materials (and styles) is unique to Frankford Meeting House.

The current Frankford Meeting House is the result of two separate building campaigns. The meeting house was erected as a single cell, three-bay-by-two-bay structure, to which was added a smaller two-bay wide section. The latter was done in the interest of accommodating both its growing membership and the women's meeting for business. The diminutive size of the women's meeting section prior to the addition reflects the English program whereby Friends met together for worship and separated for business meetings. By the late eighteenth century, American Friends began to arrange their meetings so that men and women sat to either side of a partition for worship and business, lowering the partition for the business meetings. The program change required equally sized meeting rooms, and lead to the development of the double, two-cell prototype. Frankford reflects a critical point in the evolution of meeting house design; Frankford is one of the few surviving examples of an early single cell structure that includes a two-bay addition to accommodate women's business meetings.[35]

2. Condition of fabric: The building appears to be structurally sound and in generally good condition. Changes, such as the removal of the partition, were made to the interior in order to accommodate the modern program. Others were done to meet modern standards of convenience, such as the addition of central heating (covering over the fireplace), plumbing, electricity, and the acoustical ceiling tile. Some significant artifacts, including the original hardware, record books, and some benches, were stolen from the meeting house in recent years. Grave markers from the burying ground also were taken. The early book cabinet, now stored in the attic, was replaced by the current one some time this century.

B. Description of Exterior:

---

[35] As the result of a field survey of Friends Meeting Houses of the Delaware Valley, conducted by Catherine Lavoie & Aaron Wunsch, 1997-99, the others of this type include: Old Haverford, Radnor, Birmingham, New Garden, Concord, Fallowfield, and Schuylkill meeting houses in Pennsylvania; and Woodbury, and Greenwich (Orthodox) meeting houses in New Jersey.

1. Overall dimensions: Frankford Meeting House is a single-story, five-bay-by-two-bay masonry structure with a side-gabled roof. The building was erected in two parts, with the western three bays constituting the original section of the meeting house. This section measures just over 40' in length and 36' in depth. A two-bay-wide addition measuring about 20' x 36' was made to the eastern end. An addition housing kitchen and bathroom facilities and measuring approximately 18-1/2' x 26' was erected to the east. A nine-bay-long wing was added to the north of this section.

2. Foundation: The foundation is of rubble stone, with openings for ventilation.

3. Walls: The west (side) and north (rear) walls are constructed of Flemish-bond brick with glazed headers. The brick walls are demarcated by a water table of Common bond brick. The walls at the south (front) and east (side) are of rubble stone, also with a water table. The building was erected in two parts, and the seams in the masonry are clearly visible. The brick work of the original (western) section is carefully keyed into the stonework, appearing as quoins at the southwest corner. Historic photographs of the opposing northeast corner (part of the 1811-12 addition) indicate that the stone and brick work was similarly integrated (now obscured by the 1947 addition). The date "1775" appears in the brickwork to the center of the north brick wall of the original section, just under the eaves. There is in fill to one side of the westernmost doorway at the south front elevation, suggesting that this opening has been reduced in size. It was possibly done when the addition containing a single, rather than double, doorway was made.

Prior to the erection of the addition, the east wall of the meeting house was white-washed. The minutes for April 13, 1802 record the appointment of an individual to "get the east end of the wall white washed on the outside." Later, a bill was submitted to the meeting for "lime, sand and workmanship at white washing the end of the meeting house." Historic photographs of the meeting house from 1893 indicate that the end wall was white-washed. This was probably the only wall white-washed because it was the site of the porch entry and privy. Heavy traffic would have necessitated additional maintenance.

4. Structural system, framing: The meeting house is of load-bearing masonry construction. The roof system consists of standard trusses with collar beams notched into place and held by pegs. There is no ridge pole. The rafters are held by pegged joints. There are no supporting purlins. Some of the collar beams have been reinforced with newer members. A continuous roof system covers the entire structure, indicating that the roof of the original building was removed when the addition was made and a new roof was built over the entire structure. A later date for the roof then the rest of the building also is suggested by the fact that the wood structural members are made from sawn, rather than hewn, timbers.

5. Porches, stoops: A gabled entry porch covers the west side doorway. It is not original, but may have been designed to mimic a traditional gabled hood once located here (possible evidence of this is covered by the current porch). The entry porch has a new decorative iron railing. The stone steps may be original. Stone stoops are located at the doorways to the south front of the meeting house.

6. Chimneys: There is an interior brick chimney at either gable end. The western chimney originally provided a flue for a fireplace. It is since closed over, but the hearth is still visible inside. The chimney at the eastern end was designed to accommodate a wood-burning stove. On the interior, it consists of a flue that extends only partially down the wall, with an opening for a stove pipe.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: There are four doorways into the meeting house, one at the west end and two at the south (front) elevation, and a fourth at the east end now enters into the addition. The west end faces the street and therefore appears as a prominent entryway. It is the only entry covered by a porch. It has a single, six-panel door believed to have been salvaged from the ca. 1704 meeting house. It has a simple, butt-joint wood surround with a bead along the inner edge. There is a large stone sill. There are two entries in the south front. One is located at the center of the three-bay original section, and the other in the western most bay of the two-bay addition. Both entryways have a single, batten door (although historic photographs indicate that there were once six-panel doors here as well). The surround is the same, but the western doorway in the original section appears to have been partially filled in, possibly reduced from a double-door entry to a single. In the western gable end, there are two batten doors. Those formerly located in east end are now obscured by an addition.

b. Windows and shutters: The meeting house is lit by twelve-over-twelve-light sash windows. Each has a simple, narrow wood surround and wood sill. The shutters have three panels (on the inside, seen when open). They are held by iron strap hinges. Most of the iron shutter stays were removed by vandals.

8. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: The roof is side-gabled and covered with slate.

b. Cornices, eaves: At the gable ends is a simple, narrow facia board with a bead along the edge. There is no overhang at the gable ends. The roof overhangs only slightly to the front and rear of the building, where there is a simple boxed cornice.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The interior of the meeting house consists of a single open space, the earlier partition that separated it into two apartments having been removed. There are tiered facing benches along the rear north wall, and an enclosed stairway in the southwest corner. The room is entered by doorways to the west and south. The attic space above is unfinished, but is large enough to stand in comfortably. A door to the east provides access to the additions, which include restrooms, a kitchen and classroom facilities.

2. Stairways: There is a partially enclosed winder stairway located in the southwest corner of the meeting room. A single run with a plain railing leads to a doorway, beyond which the stairway is enclosed and winds around to the attic.

3. Flooring: The floors are of random-width wood planking.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls are plastered with wide tongue-and-groove wainscoting that has been grain-painted to resemble pine. The ceiling is covered with acoustical tiles. Two large summer beams run the length of the interior space, each supported by two tapering wood columns resting on a high plinth. The attic space is unfinished.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The doorways--two to the south front and one to either side--are recessed and have plain reveals and no surrounds. The doors are constructed of tongue-and-groove planks held together in a pattern work of rose-head nails and hung by large iron strap hinges. The hardware is a combination of thumb-latches and slide bolts, with iron bars across the doors. A double set of six-panel doors provides access into the additions at the east elevation. It replaced the original, single doorway when the first addition was made in 1947.

b. Windows: Like the door, the windows also are recessed, with plain reveals and no surrounds. The windows are covered with wood blinds (painted dark green) hung beneath a decorative cut-out valance. The window frames and surrounds are painted a light brown color.

6. Benches: The facing benches consist of two tiers with two rows of benches (the upper row of benches has been removed). It runs most of the length of the north rear wall, broken by steps to either end, and to the center. The benches were increased in length to extend the entire distance of the room. This may have been done when the addition was

made, as the union appears at about the same place that the original section of the building ended. It could otherwise have been done when the partition was removed.

7. Partition: No longer extant. Dutchmen appearing in the summer beams suggest the partition was located to the west of the third bay, however. The partition divided the original meeting house unevenly, with two-thirds to the west and one-third to the east, or fairly evenly divided the structure with the addition. This suggests that when the main section of the meeting house was built in 1776, the Frankford Friends were still meeting together for worship and separating by gender for business meetings (requiring the room for the former purpose to be twice the size of the ladder). The smaller eastern portion probably was used by the women for meeting for business. After the addition was made, the partition in its same location would have evenly divided the expanded length, conforming to the new program whereby men and women met on separate sides of the partition for worship as well, merely lowering the partition for business.

However, a 1945 plan for the addition indicates that "lift up partitions" were located where the end wall of the original section once stood. It is unclear whether this was the actual location of a partition, or one that was proposed. It could have been the second location of a partition that moved during the twentieth century after separate meetings for business were eliminated. The latter location could have provided a social room adjacent to the new kitchen.

8. Mechanical equipment:

a. Heating: Originally heated by a fireplace and a wood-burning stove, the meeting house is now warmed by base-board heaters. The fireplace located to the center of the west side wall was closed over, but the chimney stack still protrudes into the room and the brick hearth is still visible. The former opening for the stove pipe is also visible. To the center of the east wall, is the corbeled bottom portion of the interior flue for a wood stove. The Treasurer's Book from 1828-72 mentions payment to the caretaker for "sawing and splitting cord wood and taking upstairs." Other references were made to storing wood in the "meeting house loft."

b. Lighting: References to payment for candles, presumably to light the interior of the meeting house, are made in the Treasurers Book 1828-1872. Since then, the building has been wired for electricity. Schoolhouse-style light fixtures are mounted to the ceiling.

c. Plumbing: Kitchen and bathroom facilities were added to the meeting house in 1947 and 1962. The first addition replaced the porch and wood-frame privy

formerly located along the east wall of the meeting house (and appearing in historic views).

D. Site:

1. Historical landscape design: At the time that the property was first acquired and the original meeting house erected, the area surrounding it was rural. It was approximately five miles from the center city of Philadelphia and connected to it by the Kings Highway. Later known as the Frankford Road, the thoroughfare is located a block west of the meeting house property. As Frankford became industrial, mills and other industrial buildings, and workers housing were put up in the area. Some industrial buildings can still be found to the southwest of the meeting house. Rowhouses were built in the immediate vicinity of the meeting house during the nineteenth century.

A burying ground is located to the south of the meeting house. The first burial is said to have occurred in 1687, making it one of the oldest Friends burying grounds in Philadelphia. As was traditional among the Friends, few of the graves are marked. Unfortunately, many of those that were marked have had their grave stones stolen in recent years. The burying ground was almost filled by 1800, and no longer used after 1860. It is believed to contain the remains of approximately 1,000 individuals, including the meeting's founder, Thomas Fairman. A stone wall once surrounded the burying ground, running through the property to the south front of the meeting house. The wall once abutted the meeting house at the privy to the east side.[36]

2. Outbuildings: There are no extant outbuildings. All that remains of the early infrastructure is the old stone mounting block. Originally located near the east side entry, closest to the women's meeting section, it was moved to its current spot north of the meeting house. Additions were made to the building in 1947 and 1962 to provide for the various functions of the meeting, however. The additions included restrooms, social hall, kitchen and class room facilities.

Historic photographs of the meeting house taken in 1893 show the location of a porch and wood-frame privy at the east end entry to the meeting house. This privy was removed when the addition was made in 1947. References to a privy appear in the preparative meeting minutes in 1803 when it was suggested that "a new necessary would be useful."

---

[36] Caroline W. Smedley, "Historical Sketch of Frankford Meeting," *Papers Read Before The Historical Society of Frankford*, Vol 2, No. 5 (1916): 222.

And in 1805, repairs to the necessary are mentioned.[37] Whether or not this was the same privy is not known.

Horse sheds once were located on the meeting house property. A 1893 historic view shows them along the western perimeter of the grounds. Mention is made within the preparative meeting minutes of repairs to the stable as early as 1783 [location unknown].[38] The first horse sheds may have been erected in 1802. In December 1800, the minutes noted "It appears that some sheds would be useful to preserve the carriages dry in stormy weather during the time of the meeting." A number of individuals where then appointed to "conclude upon a plan" for the stables which were reported complete on January 19, 1802. In 1816, a committee recommended building "five double stalls on the eastern side of the meeting lott [sic.]" in addition to moving the stable "in line therewith."[39]

In 1798, the old school building was sold and a new school building erected.[40] The school house stood on a two-acre lot adjacent to the meeting house property. The school house later burned, along with a row of horse sheds [date unknown].[41] The school house lot was sold in 1865 for $1,200.[42]

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

Note on sources: FHL refers to the Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA. HV refers to the Quaker Collection at Haverford College.

A. Early Views:

Friends Historical Library, Meeting House Photograph Collection, Frankford Meeting House:

* Gilbert Cope, 4th month 12, 1893, Perspective view of south front and west side (#110/P526/011)

* Ibid., Perspective view of north rear and east side (#110/p526/012)

---

[37] Frankford Preparative Meeting, Minutes, 24th day 5th month 1803 & 21st day 5th month 1805.

[38] Ibid., 21st day 10th month 1783.

[39] Ibid., 28th day 5th month 1816.

[40] Ibid., 11th day of the 9th month and the 20th day of the 11th month 1798.

[41] Pennsylvania Historical Survey, 154.

[42] Frankford Preparative Meeting, Treasurer's Book, 1828-1872; FHL RG2/Ph/F7.

* W.W. Dewees Collection, (date unknown), Perspective view of north rear and west side (#110/P526/008)

* Heacock & Platt, Architects. "Additions to Frankford Friends Meeting House." June 1, 1945 (#110/P526)

B. Interviews:

Joyce, Halley. Interview by author, June 2, 1999, Frankford Preparative Meeting House, Frankford neighborhood of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

C. Bibliography

Primary and Unpublished Sources:

Abington Monthly Meeting, Minutes, 1774-1811 (FHL Film MR-Ph 5)

Ibid., 1812-18 (FHL Film MR-Ph 6)

Frankford Preparative Meeting. Minutes, Mens' Meeting, Book #2, 1794-1820 (HV2.2.2)

Ibid., Misc. Finances, Treasurer's Book 1861-1874 (FHL RG2/Ph1/F7)

Ibid., Treasurer's Book 1828-1872 (FHL RG2/Ph/F7)

Harris, Dorothy. "Factors Influencing the Architecture of 19th Century Meeting Houses." Unpublished paper, Amer. Civ. 600, May 1955 (FHL).

Matlack, Chalkley T. "Brief Historical Sketches concerning Friends' Meetings of the Past and Present with special reference to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting." Moorestown, N.J., Compiled 1938 (available at HV & FHL).

Oxford Preparative Meeting. Minutes, Book #1, 1772-1794 (HV N2.2.1)

Ibid., Accounts, 1773-1786 (HV N2.2.1)

Philadelphia Monthly Meeting. Minutes,

Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting. Minutes, 1757-1800 (FHL, MR-PH 445).

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Minutes, 1681-1708 (FHL Film MR-Ph-469).

Tvaryanas, Damon. "The New Jersey Quaker Meeting House: A Typology and Inventory," MA Thesis in Historic Preservation, University of Pennsylvania, 1993.

Secondary and Published Sources:

Bacon, Margaret Hope. "A Widening Path: Women in the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Move towards Equality, 1681-1929," *Friends in the Delaware Valley: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1681-1981.* Haverford, PA: Friends Historical Association, 1981.

Bauman, Richard. *For the Reputation of Truth; Politics, Religion, and Conflict among the Pennsylvania Quakers, 1750-1800.* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1971.

Benjamin, Philip S. The Philadelphia Quakers in the Industrial Age, 1865-1910. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1976.

Brinton, Howard H. *Friends For 300 Years.* Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1952.

Brinton, Walter. "Friends Meetings in Frankford." Papers Read Before *The Historical Society of Frankford*, Vol. 2 No. 4 (1914); 127-35.

Bronner, Edwin. "Quaker Landmarks in Early Philadelphia." Transcript of the American Philosophical Society, FHL.

Ibid. "The Center Square Meeting House & Other Early Meeting Houses of Philadelphia." *The Bulletin of Friends Historical Association*, vol. 44, no. 2 (Autumn Number 1955);

Butler, David M. "Quaker Meeting Houses in America and England: Impressions and Comparisons." *Quaker History*, vol. 79, no. 2, (Fall 1990): 93-104.

Ibid. *Quaker Meeting Houses of the Lake Counties.* Friends Historical Society, 1978.

Ibid. "The Making of Meeting Houses." *Friends Quarterly* (July 1980): 316-24.

Chedbunn, O.S. "Theology and Architecture in the Tradition of the Meeting House." *The Friends Quarterly*, 20, no. 2 (April 1977): 60-73.

Faris, John T. *Old Churches and Meeting Houses in and Around Philadelphia.* Philadelphia & London: J.B. Lippincott, Company, 1926.

Jones, Rufus M. *The Quakers in the American Colonies.* New York: The Norton Library, W.W. Norton & Company, 1966.

Lidbetter, Herbert. *The Friends Meeting House.* York: The Ebor Press, 1961.

Ibid. "Quaker Meeting Houses, 1670-1850." *Architectural Review* (London) 99 (1946): 99-116.

Marietta, Jack. *The Reformation of American Quakerism, 1748-1783.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press,

Milligun, Edward H. "The Worshiping Community & its Meeting Houses." *The Friends Quarterly*

Pennsylvania Historical Survey, Division of Community Service Programs, Work Projects Administration. *Inventory of Church Archives, Society of Friends in Pennsylvania.* Philadelphia: Friends Historical Association, 1941.

Price, Walter. "Old Meeting Houses." *The Friend* (24 September 1936): 115-18.

Proud, Robert. *The History of Pennsylvania in North America.* Vol. I. Philadelphia: Zachariah Poulson, Jr., Printer, 1797.

Russell, Elbert. *The History of Quakerism.* New York: The MacMillan Company, 1942.

Scharf, Thomas and Thompson Westcott. *History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884.* Philadelphia: L.H. Everts & Company, 1884.

Smedley, Caroline W. "Historical Sketch of Frankford Meeting." *Papers Read Before The Historical Society of Frankford*, Vol. 2 No. 5 (1916); 219-25.

Thum, Charles. "Creative Quaker Architecture." *Friends Intelligencer*, vol 107, no. 40 (7 October 1950): 587-88.

Trueblood, D. Elton. "Quaker Architecture." *The Friend* (29 September 1936): 118-19.

Watson, John E. *Annals of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania in the Olden Time*, vol. II & III, 2nd ed. Philadelphia: Leary, Stuart Co., 1927.

Wilson, Robert H. *Philadelphia Quakers, 1681-1981.* Philadelphia: The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1981.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION:

The documentation of the Frankford Friends Meeting House was undertaken during the summer of 1999 as part of a larger program to record the Friends Meeting Houses of the Delaware Valley. The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), E. Blaine Cliver, Chief of HABS/HAER; Paul Dolinsky, Chief HABS; funding was made possible through a congressional appropriation for documentation in Southeastern Pennsylvania. The project was planned and administered by HABS historians Aaron V. Wunsch and Catherine C. Lavoie; and architect Robert R. Arzola.

Measured Drawings were produced by supervising architect John P. White, and architectural technicians Cleary Larkin, James McGrath, Jr., Elaine Schweitzer, Kelly Willard, and Irina Madalina Ienulescu (US ICOMOS). The project Historians were Aaron V. Wunsch and Catherine C. Lavoie; this report was written by Catherine Lavoie. Large format photography was undertaken by HABS photographer Jack E. Boucher. Special thanks to Joyce Halley, local historian and clerk of Frankford Meeting, for her assistance and support.