

BUCKINGHAM FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE
5684 York Road
Lahaska
Bucks County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-6224

HABS
PA-6224

WRITTEN HISTORICAL & DESCRIPTIVE DATA
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BUCKINGHAM FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE

HABS NO. PA-6224

- Location: 5684 York Road (Rt. 202), Lahaska, Bucks County, Pennsylvania
- Owner: Trustees for the Buckingham Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
- Present Use: Meeting House for religious worship and general use by the Buckingham Meeting of the Society of Friends
- Significance: Completed in 1768, Buckingham Friends Meeting House is the earliest known example of the *doubled*¹ type that became a conventional form for American Friends meeting houses for nearly a century. While earlier meeting houses varied greatly in style, in form they appeared externally as a single-cell structure.² These buildings were either partitioned into two unequally sized apartments or had a smaller structure appended to accommodate separate men's and women's business meetings. This plan conformed to the old English program whereby men and women met together for worship and separated to conduct gender specific business meetings. Buckingham's symmetrical, two-cell form contained equal apartments. The design expressed a programmatic change. In contrast to the early style of meeting, men and women met on separate sides of the partition, which was open for worship and closed for business.

The wide array of meeting house forms erected prior to Buckingham reflects the somewhat dynamic nature of meeting program and meeting house design before the later eighteenth century. Working through various alternatives to develop a building that best suited their silent worship and democratic form of self rule, Buckingham posed a logical solution. The vast majority of meeting houses erected in the Delaware Valley during the decades to follow adopted the new form. Although attributed largely to the Quaker belief in the equality of the sexes, the standardization of meeting house design also coincided with important movements in Quaker history such as "Quietism" and spiritual reform. During this time period the Friends, through the leadership of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, directed the further rejection of the non-Quaker world and demanded stricter adherence to their doctrine. Quaker discipline is re-written and further

¹ The term "doubled plan" was coined by Damon Tvaryanas in his master's thesis entitled "The New Jersey Quaker Meeting House: A Typology and Inventory," Thesis in Historic Preservation, University of Pennsylvania, 1993. What is meant by this term, and how it is used in this writing, is that both halves of the structure are identical; the essential single-cell unit is *doubled* to create a single unified structure. Although his study is limited to New Jersey, Tvaryanas acknowledges Buckingham as the first Delaware Valley meeting house to adopt a doubled plan (p. 73).

² Single-cell refer to a one-room plan. Although in some cases these buildings were partitioned into two interior apartments, the exterior generally consisted of a central doorway flanked by windows, suggesting a one-room structure.

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codified to create a more cohesive program that may have encouraged the development of a uniform meeting house design.

Despite moves to uphold tenets of simplicity, Buckingham Meeting House's use of the popular Georgian-style of architecture reflects contemporary tastes and thus the "worldliness" of the Buckingham Friends. While the aesthetic emphasis on symmetry lent itself to the new meeting house design, the sophistication of its Georgian styling reflected the affluence of the Buckingham Quakers. From an architectural standpoint, Buckingham is among the most finely articulated meeting houses in the Delaware Valley.

For nearly three hundred years, this site has served as the focal point for the religious, social and educational activities of Buckingham Friends. The current 1768 meeting house is the fourth on this site. The first house was erected between 1705 and 1708 by English Quakers who were some of the earliest settlers to the southern portion of Bucks County.

Historian: Catherine C. Lavoie, HABS Historian, 1997

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1768. Construction began on the present Buckingham Meeting House in 1767 and it was ready for use by January of 1769. Evidence for the construction date is found in the 1768 date stone in the east gable end, and the record created by the monthly and quarterly meeting minutes between 1767 and 1769. At a monthly meeting held November 2, 1767 it was stated, "After some consideration relating to building a Meeting House this Meeting being informed that the Subscriptions for that purpose amount to 554 (pounds) or upwards concludes that the work may go forward as soon as possible...." By the following month, "The Friends appointed to superintend the work of building a Meeting House" report that progress had been made already.³ There is no further mention of it until the 2nd of January 1769 when it was reported that Buckingham Meeting House was expected to be ready to accommodate the next Monthly Meeting.

2. Architect: As was typical of the Society of Friends during this period, the Buckingham Meeting House was designed and erected by the Quaker community itself. The design

³ Buckingham Monthly Meeting, Minutes, 1st day of 12th month 1767 (on microfilm at the Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA.).

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was determined in consultation with the larger quarterly meeting. The construction was undertaken by skilled craftsmen who were members of Buckingham Meeting. A committee, consisting of meeting members Joseph Watson, Thomas Bye, Isaac Pickering, and Henry Paxson, was appointed to “direct the work” of the builders.⁴ The committee selected stonemason and master builder Mathias Hutchinson to erect its meeting house. Although he referred to himself as a contractor, men such as Hutchinson served as the equivalent of an architect before the advent of the profession. Hutchinson’s professional experience helps explain the unusually fine articulation of the meeting house design. He is also responsible for other structures in the area, including the Friends school building erected on the same property in 1794. Hutchinson later rose to prominence in the greater community by serving as an Associate Judge of Bucks County for two terms.

3. Builder, suppliers: As mentioned, Mathias Hutchinson served as the builder for the meeting house. His responsibilities included the masonry work and plastering. The carpentry was undertaken by Edward Good. Thomas Smith originally was appointed by the building committee to serve as superintendent to oversee construction. According to the minutes, he served for six months in this capacity then, after requesting to be released from his duties, he was replaced by Joseph Ellicott. According to oral tradition, the stone was quarried within the neighborhood.

4. Original and Subsequent Owners: Prior to the establishment of their own meeting for worship in 1701, the Quakers of this area were members of the Falls Meeting. In 1705, James Streater conveyed to Falls Monthly Meeting a ten-acre tract for the use of Friends of the Buckingham area to establish their own meeting house and burial ground.⁵ An adjoining three-and-a-half acres was donated by Edmund Kinsey in 1729. Kinsey’s parcel was needed for the erection of a new meeting house upon higher ground, and for more burial ground. Additional property was obtained in 1767, providing the site for the current meeting house. The burial grounds were extended through the acquisition of smaller parcels in 1763 and 1805. In 1807, a small plot in the corner of the graveyard was set aside for the interment of African-Americans.⁶ Following the 1827 schism that divided the Friends between Hicksite and Orthodox factions, the Hicksite Friends retained possession of the property. For nearly three hundred years, this tract--or portions thereof--have been held by the Buckingham Friends, who have used it continuously as a meeting place and burying ground.

⁴Buckingham Monthly Meeting, Minutes, 2nd day of the 11th month 1767.

⁵ Buckingham Monthly Meeting. *The Two Hundredth Anniversary of Buckingham Monthly Meeting* (Philadelphia: Walter H. Jenkins, 1923), 15. The conveyance included rights-of-way through Streater’s plantation for five separate roadways.

⁶ 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), 113.

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5. Original Plans and Construction: No building plans or specifications were found. Based on the timeliness of its execution, the meeting house probably was erected as originally planned (it was begun November 1867 and ready for use by January 1769). Few changes appear to have been made to the original structure. Among the noteworthy extant features are the pedimented door hoods, a feature common to meeting houses erected during the eighteenth through the mid-nineteenth centuries.

6. Changes and Additions: The Buckingham Friends Meeting House is one of the most intact meeting houses still in use in the region. Few changes have been made beyond those necessary to maintain the meeting house and to meet modern standards for use, principally heating and electrification. The gallery has been left intact while similar meeting houses installed permanent floors in order to create more usable space. At Buckingham Meeting House, a removable “winter ceiling” is used to conserve heat during the cold months of the year. This “ceiling” can support weight and so provides temporary storage space, particularly in the west side of the building. Because the Friends no longer meet separately for business, and their numbers are reduced, the west apartment (formerly the men’s meeting room) is used as a social room and library.

A porch was added later to the east side of Buckingham Meeting House. Beginning in the 1860s, most meeting houses’ doorway hoods were replaced with a porch running the length of the front facade. Porches provided social space before and after the meetings, and shelter from inclement weather.

The heating and other mechanical systems have changed over time. The meeting house originally was heated by stoves, one in the center of each apartment. The interior gable-end chimney flues are still visible from the attic. Stove pipes led from the center of each room up through the gallery to the end walls. The distance did not allow for sufficient draw, so the gable end flues were replaced by center brick chimneys (one per side) that rest on the attic floor joists.⁷ The brick pads on which the stoves sat are intact in both rooms. An 1884 stove stands in the west meeting room.⁸

A single-story stone privy structure was added near the northeast corner of the meeting house, and connected to the main block by a porch (the dates of construction are

⁷ This seemingly unusual feature of a free-standing chimney appears to have been the solution for a number of Friends meeting houses in the Delaware Valley. It allowed for the most sufficient draw through a closer, more direct placement of the chimney, without interrupting the open space of the meeting room. This arrangement appears in a number of other meeting houses, including Bradford, Merion and Radnor. The weight is apparently causing some strain to the structural systems in these cases.

⁸ A new stove was installed in January of 1879. In April 1884, a new Silver Moon no. 16 coal stove was installed in the “men’s end” of the meeting house (\$44.50 for stove & pipe and \$2.00 for installation). Buckingham Preparative Meeting, Misc. Financial Records, Treasurer’s Book 1876-1926 (Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA).

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unknown). The privy, originally a “four-holer” with a sand pit, now has modern restrooms for men and women, that were installed ca. 1935. At the same time, the in-ground cistern (located to the rear of the meeting house) that supplied the site with water was replaced by a well and pump (placed near the school building). Electricity was introduced into the meeting house sometime during the early twentieth century. About thirty-five years ago, hot water heating was added.

In addition to modern heating and restroom facilities, other creature comforts were added in the early twentieth century. The treasurer’s book indicates payment for window shades in 1901, and cushions for the benches in 1903. In the earlier days cold rooms and stiff (sometimes backless) benches had been advocated in the interest of keeping members from dozing off during meeting for worship. Friends of the twentieth century, however, came to expect certain comforts, and could probably argue that they contributed to the contentment (and concentration) of the spirit!

B. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Introduction: The Evolution to the Prototypical Doubled Friends Meeting House

Buckingham Friends Meeting House, completed in January of 1769, is the earliest known example of the two-cell, symmetrically balanced or *doubled* meeting house in the Delaware Valley (and possibly the nation). It became the prototypical form for American Friends meeting houses of the mid-Atlantic region for the next century. Prior to its development, meeting house design varied more widely. A fixed plan had not been developed, and the meeting houses generously adopted building traditions and materials indigenous to the areas in which they were erected. The greater standardization of meeting house design was, in some ways, the inevitable result of over a century of experimentation. Religious persecution, and their own beliefs regarding the unsuitability of “steeple houses” to Quaker worship, prevented the early English members of the Society of Friends from developing a building type specifically for use as a meeting house prior to the 1689 Act of Toleration. They choose instead to meet in the out-of-doors, or in houses or farm buildings adapted for meeting. Unfettered by the persecution experienced by their English counterparts, the Friends who immigrated to the Delaware Valley beginning in the 1670s explored various alternatives, developing buildings forms that best facilitated their silent meetings for worship and separate men’s and women’s business. Other influences were also at work. The standardization of meeting house design that began during the 1760s coincided with the Quaker movement for spiritual reform and the rise of Quietism. Standardization also corresponded with a significant programmatic change that reflected the rise of women within the society.

Beginning in the mid eighteenth century both external and internal pressures had a tremendous impact upon Quaker thought and practice. The outbreak of the Indian Wars in the 1750s provided the catalyst for growing opposition to Quakerism previously unknown to the Pennsylvania

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Friends. Adherence to the “peace testimony” precluded support for the war cause, which opened the Quakers to harsh criticism from the general population. The Society of Friends’ entire value system, then referred to as the “reputation of Truth,” was placed under attack.⁹ As their ideology came into conflict with the realities of pre-Revolutionary War America the Friends turned further inward, relinquishing their hold upon the State Assembly and other governmental positions. At the same time arose an important movement in Quaker history, that of spiritual reform. By mid-eighteenth century, a influential segment of the Quaker population believed that reform was needed. The movements leaders asserted that the inwardly derived conviction that motivated the first generations of Friends had abated. They claimed the fervor of the early converts was lost, and a complacency had fallen over the later generations of birthright¹⁰ members. The rise in affluence and involvement in worldly affairs were identified as important factors in the decline. They believed that these factors resulted in a weakening of the “Discipline” or the rules governing conduct. As one historian explained, “The earnestness and honesty which characterized Quaker enterprise in both England and America earned them a prosperity which made their testimonies of simplicity and democracy difficult to maintain.”¹¹ In order to revive the “deep spiritual inwardness”¹² that characterized the initial period in Quaker history, a call went out for greater separation from the non-Quaker world, and stricter adherence to Quaker doctrine.

At the 1755 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, reformers appointed a committee to revise the Discipline, and also made provisions for its enforcement. The new edition reflects the reformer’s desire to uphold the testimonies outlined in the discipline as a mechanism for reversing the spiritual decline that was overtaking the Society. It stated, “Elders, overseers, and all others active in the discipline (are) to be *zealously concerned for the cause of Truth* and honestly to labour to repair the breaches too obvious in many places that there may be some well grounded hopes of the *primitive beauty and purity of the Church may be restored*.”¹³ A committee was established to inspect each monthly and quarterly meeting and insure adherence to the new

⁹ “Truth” basically refers to their testimonies. The term “reputation of truth” was used by the Friends of the period in their advices against participation in war and politics. It later became the title of a study by Richard Bauman. Richard Bauman, *For the Reputation of Truth; Politics, Religion, and Conflict among the Pennsylvania Quakers, 1750-1800* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1971).

¹⁰ The term “birthright membership” referred to the policy by which individuals were automatically eligible for entry into the Society if both parents were already Friends. This became the official policy in 1737. It meant that these individuals need not undergo inward conviction, the standard means of acceptance prior to 1737.

¹¹ Philip S. Benjamin, *The Philadelphia Quakers in the Industrial Age, 1865-1920* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1976), 50.

¹² Howard H. Brinton, *Friends For 300 Years* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1952), 176.

¹³ Society of Friends, *Discipline, 1755*; as cited in Jack D. Marietta, *The Reformation of American Quakerism, 1748-1783* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, ?) 54.

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discipline.¹⁴ Most importantly, the “Queries”--a list of questions intended to gauge member’s adherence to the discipline--was revised. Initially intended for self-introspection, the Yearly Meeting now required periodic public readings and the submission of written responses.¹⁵ The information was used as a guide to determine the general state of the Society. Within the individual meetings, adherence to the Discipline was carefully monitored by the elders and overseers, including home visits. Failure to comply could result in “disownment,” or expulsion from the society.¹⁶ Among the offenses most frequently recorded in the minutes is “marrying out of meeting,” which was seen as a threat to the purity of the Society, and thus, their value system. Henceforth, the reading of the queries became a more significant part of meeting program.

In addition to the rise in admonishments and disownments was the distribution of written “advices.” The advices were intended to draw Friends away from the affairs of the larger society. Many were directed specifically towards discouraging political involvement. The advices could, however, be more generally applied to other aspects of daily life; in order to combat the external societal pressures, a retreat into “Quietism” was prescribed. The term refers to a state of consciousness conducive to divine insight, as in “quietly waiting upon the lord.” Quietists argued for the submission of self will before the will of God. As the Yearly Meeting of 1770 urged, “seek after *Quietude* and stilness of Mind, in order that under the direction of true Wisdom, we may be Enabled to administer advice to any of our Brethren, who may be inadvertently drawn aside to join with or countenance...the Commotions prevailing.”¹⁷ Quietism was practiced by Friends of previous generations. During this period Quietism took on added meaning; it signified withdrawal from mainstream society. Thus, Quietism came to define an era rife with conflict in which the Friends become more insular as a society.

Concomitant with the rise of the reform and Quietist movements, was a programmatic change centered around the treatment of the women’s meeting for business. The change reflected an elevation in the status of women within the Society. In England, the entire meeting--male and female--met for worship in a single room. Once the worship concluded, the men remained in the main room for their business meeting and the women removed to an adjacent room in order to conduct their business meeting. The women’s business room only needed to be approximately half the size of the main meeting room since only the females were in attendance. It also did not require the raised “facing bench” from which the overseers, ministers, and elders guided the

¹⁴ The committee of thirty-one included leaders of the reform movement John Churchman, Samuel Fothergill, and John Woolman.

¹⁵ The Yearly Meeting now required a reading of the queries at least every three months during all meetings (preparative, monthly, etc.) and a written response at every quarterly meeting.

¹⁶ The Friends were not anxious to completely alienate individuals who were disowned or “read out of meeting,” however. Thus disownment often referred to active participation only. These individual could silently attend meeting for worship and, if redeemed, regain full membership within the Society.

¹⁷ As cited in Bauman, 135.

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meeting for worship. Most English meeting houses, therefore, contain a large room with a facing bench with a smaller adjoining room. The extant early meeting houses of the Delaware Valley, and primary information available on many more, suggest that the Quaker immigrants adhered to this pattern. Many of the houses built prior to the 1760s began as single-cell structures. They were either partitioned to contain two disproportionately sized interior apartments, or included smaller appendages to accommodate a separate women's meeting for business. The differences in plan in the meeting houses built from the late seventeenth to the late eighteenth centuries thus reflect various solutions to accommodating meetings for worship and separate men's and women's business meetings.

Beginning in the later eighteenth century, American Friends meeting houses are built to contain equally sized men's and women's meeting rooms. Men and women now sat on separate sides of a partition for business *and* worship. They simply closing the partition during meetings for business. It has been suggested that it was the American Friends' staunch belief in the equality of the sexes that had resulted in this "doubled" form. English historian David Butler referred to it as the American Friends "even-handed equality."¹⁸ Although the Society of Friends' founder George Fox advocated separate men's and women's business meetings, and the London Yearly Meeting promoted them as early as 1671, they were not universally accepted in England.¹⁹ Acceptance was much more widespread in America. The Philadelphia Friends established separate business meetings for men and women in the first Yearly Meeting, held in Burlington, New Jersey in 1681.²⁰ It is true that women (in England *and* America) played an equal role in the meeting for worship and could serve as ministers and elders. They were generally excluded, however, from issues such as policy making and finance. These matters were determined in the men's meeting for business, while the women's meeting was confined to more social issues such as marriage and aid to the needy. Thus, the change in American Friends program did not constitute a leveling of the roles played by men and women within the meeting, but probably reflected more pragmatic concerns.

If, in fact, equality rather than practicality played a role in the equal treatment of men and women meeting rooms, it was largely an outcome of their spiritual reform movement. By placing marriage within the Society as a central issue, the importance of the women's meeting for

¹⁸ This phrase was coined by English historian David M. Butler in referring to the fact that there was nothing to distinguish the men's side of the building from the women's. David M. Butler, "Quaker Meeting Houses in America and England: Impressions and Comparisons," *Quaker History*, vol. 79, no.2 (Fall 1990), ?

¹⁹ As an indication of the reluctance of the English to adhere to separate business meetings, the subject had to be reintroduced before the London Yearly Meeting in 1744 and 1745. In 1766, the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Women Friends joined with the men's meeting in an attempt to press the issue of establishing a yearly women's business meeting in England. See Margaret Hope Bacon, "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) 179-80.

²⁰ General or Yearly Meeting Minutes, Burlington, NJ (at Thomas Gardner's home), 31th day of the 6th month 1681.

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business was elevated. Previously considered to be the domain of women, rules governing marriage are now viewed as crucial to the viability of the Society. Responding to the 1755 revision of the Discipline, the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting established important initiatives that required the increased involvement of women. First, women are included on the committee that visited Friends families in order to insure adherence to the Discipline. Secondly, marrying out of meeting officially became grounds for disownment in 1762. These two actions had immediate consequences for the individual meetings. Reflected in monthly meeting minutes is a substantial increase in the amount of time devoted to addressing violations to the 1762 enactment. Men took greater interest in the proceedings of women's business meetings as they initiated cases for review. The men's meeting, particularly the yearly meetings, address the women's meeting more frequently.²¹ The elevated status of the women's business meeting is further demonstrated when, in 1760, the "Great Meeting House" is turned over for women's use during the yearly meetings.

Although a correlation can be made between certain social and political events of the mid to late eighteenth century and the development of a meeting house prototype, it can not be substantiated through written evidence.²² As the Friends become more focused on upholding the discipline, however, conformity was seen as central to the future survival of the Society. Adherence to the rules of discipline, like submission to the will of God, was a dominant theme of the period. The exponential rise in disownments between 1755 and 1775 are a testimony to the stricter code of conduct.²³ The disownment of dissenters left the Friends of the Delaware Valley with a much more homogenous population. By codifying the rules and procedures, the didacticism of the reformists may have helped to facilitate uniformity in meeting house design as well meeting practice.

The development of the Buckingham Meeting House prototype marked the culmination of nearly a century of experimentation in meeting house design and layout. Its evolution can be traced through earlier meeting house types. Most of the early Friends meeting houses of the Delaware Valley consisted of a single-cell structure. The model established by Philadelphia's second Bank Meeting House (1702) is of a three-bay-by-three-bay building large enough to comfortably accommodate separate business meetings. A gallery in the second story allowed for later expansion. An extant example is Sadsbury Meeting House (1747), in the Christiana vicinity of Pennsylvania. Many of the rural meeting houses begin with a single-cell structure to which was

²¹ Bacon, 179.

²² This absence may be attributed to the fact that worldly concerns, such as meeting house design, are conspicuously absent from meeting minutes. Attention is focused upon the meeting and the welfare of its members, and not on the meeting house.

²³ Violations--or enforcement of them--increased 64% in 1756, the year following the revised Discipline, and remained high in the ensuing decades. Disownments, likewise, saw a drastic increase. From 1755 to 1776, the Society of Friends in Pennsylvania disowned 3,157 members. Jack Marietta, *The Reformation of American Quakerism*, 54-55.

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added a smaller section to accommodate a women's meeting. This pattern is exemplified by Radnor Meeting House in Pennsylvania, which combines an original 1718 three-bay or single-cell form with a smaller two-bay addition. The creation of an addition became a popular means of both enlarging meeting houses, and better accommodating a women's meeting and other functions of the Society. Early two-cell meeting houses treated the two sections as separate and relatively dissimilar entities. The few early meeting houses that were built as symmetrical two-cell, dual-entry structures were five bays across. They contained disproportionately sized interior apartments, indicating an adherence to the old program. Maiden Creek (1759) in Pennsylvania, and the original section of Mt. Laurel (1760) in New Jersey provide examples.

A significant development in the evolution of meeting house design is seen at Exeter Meeting House, erected in Exeter, Pennsylvania in 1758, ten years prior to Buckingham. It was built as a two-cell structure containing two equally sized apartments for men's and women's business meetings. Unlike Buckingham, the two sections are, however, treated as separate, dissimilar units. From the front, the larger entryway into the men's section give it prominence over the women's section. From the rear, there is symmetry within each individual sections only; the prominent western section is three bays across with a central carriage door, and the eastern section has only two windows. The Buckingham type was unique in that the two sections--the mens and women's apartments--are treated as separate but equal parts of a whole structure. Although the women's section of Buckingham Meeting House is actually slightly smaller than the men's (a characteristic not repeated in subsequent structures of its type), the two sections are otherwise indistinguishable. The Buckingham prototype, then, combined the new meeting program with a construction based upon the duplication of the original single-cell unit. It was the first in the Delaware Valley to achieve a *doubled plan*.²⁴

As news of Buckingham's attributes spread, building committees sent delegations to study its design and emulate its form in their own meeting houses. The first was Chesterfield Meeting House erected in 1773 in Burlington County, New Jersey.²⁵ A committee of Chesterfield Friends

²⁴ Third Haven Meeting House (1682) in Easton, Maryland possesses the doubled form, but it was achieved through alteration and additions in the 1790s. Only two other extant meeting houses built prior to 1768 possess dual front entries, although not of the doubled Buckingham type. These are Old Kennett (1731), Kennett Square, Chester County, Pennsylvania; and Mount Laurel (1760), also known as Evesham, Moorestown, Burlington County, New Jersey. Old Kennett has a centrally located, *paired* entry, which is probably a later modification. Mount Laurel, which has a *five-bay-wide* front (with three bays across the second story), suggesting that it was unequally partitioned. It received an addition in 1797 (probably to both meet the new meeting house standard for equally sized women's meeting, and generally enlarge the structure). Another significant advance toward the balanced two-cell plan may have been Bristol Meeting House (also in Bucks Quarter) received additions that made it a two-story, six-bay, doubled type possibly before the construction of Buckingham. Its fenestration, however, is highly irregular.

²⁵ Damon Tvaryanas. "The New Jersey Quaker Meeting House: A Typology and Inventory," MA Thesis in Historic Preservation (University of Pennsylvania, 1993), 73-74. Tvaryanas' thesis was extremely valuable in providing the context for New Jersey Friends Meeting Houses. The field survey conducted by Catherine Lavoie and Aaron Wunsch as part of the larger project to record Friends Meeting Houses of the Delaware Valley also verifies the proliferation of the "Buckingham type" or the double house in New Jersey. Other examples include: Salem (1772), Woodstown (1785), Plainfield (1788), Upper Greenwich

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reported, “We have also considered of the size of the house and plan, and are of opinion the Buckingham Meeting House is nearest to what we would recommend.”²⁶ Chesterfield is likewise documented as having provided the model for the Burlington Meeting House, erected in Burlington, New Jersey in 1784. The New York Monthly Meeting House at Queen Street (also known as the Pearl Street Meeting), in New York City, also is documented as adopting the Buckingham model. According to Queen Street Meeting’s minutes “The committee appointed to Superintend the building (of the proposed meeting house) are requested to procure a plan of Buckingham Meeting House...take a plan of it and inquire if there are any parts of it that can be made better.”²⁷ Likewise, when members of Buckingham Meeting living in nearby Solebury decided to build their own meeting house in 1805, the building committee recommended “erecting a house 63 feet long and 36 feet wide, on the model of the one at Buckingham.”²⁸

Beginning in 1789 with the construction of Wrightstown and Falls meeting houses, virtually every meeting house erected in the succeeding decades in Bucks Quarter adopted the Buckingham form. Each is carefully modified in size or detail to suit the needs, tastes, or perhaps budget, of its members. Other examples in Bucks Quarter include: Middletown (1793), Solebury (1806), and Newtown (1817) Friends meeting houses. In nearby Abington Quarter, four of the five meeting houses built between 1768 and 1868 are of the doubled type, including: Horsham (1803), Byberry (1808), Gwynedd (1823) and Richland (1862- although one story). In the Western Quarter, the doubled, six-bay prototype appears mostly in a single-story form in such meeting houses as Marlboro (1801), Chester (1829), Parkersville (1830), Lansdowne (1831), and London Britain (1834). In addition, a number of single cell meeting houses later received additions that constitute a doubling of the original structure. One example is Abington Meeting House (1787) in Montgomery County, PA, which received its addition in 1797.

By the early nineteenth century the Buckingham form clearly is established as the prototype for Friends Meeting House design throughout the mid-Atlantic region. Important variations occur soon after, particularly in the fenestration. In several doubled meeting houses built in the 1790s and the decades to follow, there are no second story windows over the first story doorways. More pronounced is the change to the rear facades. In the early examples, the rear facade appears almost as a mirror image of the front. Later, the rear includes only a few enlarged windows at a single elevation. As noted, variations also included a single-story version. Probably because of reduced meeting size, numerous buildings of this type were erected

(1799), Mullica Hill (1808), Mansfield (1812), Medford Orthodox & Hicksite houses (1812, 1842), Shrewsbury (1816), both Haddonfield houses (1851).

²⁶ Burlington Quarterly Meeting, Minutes, 30th day 8th month 1773.

²⁷ New York Monthly Meeting, Minutes, 10th day 9mo. 1774.

²⁸ Atkins Family Scrapbook; newspaper clippings (chronicles the history of the Buckingham Meeting in a series of articles), 1889-93; No. VI 1805-20.

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following the Hicksite-Orthodox split of 1827. The schism resulted in a boom in construction over the next decade or so, as the minority group left to join another meeting or erect a new house. In some examples, the doubled type is consolidated into a four-bay structure, eliminating the two central windows and pairing the doorways. An example of this type is the Little Abington Meeting House built by the Orthodox Friends in 1836. These variations are important because they mark the acceptance of the prototype. The structure is treated as a whole rather than as the careful doubling of separate parts.

The prototype remained popular for nearly a century. It did not decline in use until the mid-1800s. By the late nineteenth century, changes occurred in both Friends meeting program and architectural practice. The evangelical movement that enveloped the nation during the late nineteenth century influenced Friends Meeting House design, which adopted church-like forms. Some even included ornamental elements of Victorian-era styles.²⁹ At the same time, the more conservative (generally Hicksite) Friends looked back to early meeting house designs for inspiration, creating retrograde building forms. Many of these meeting houses appear to be the early, single-cell type, but have been exaggerated in size to accommodate two equally sized meeting rooms. And while some Friends meetings outside the Delaware Valley actually took on pastoral ministers, many more began to de-emphasize the role of ministers, and of separate mens and women's business meetings. These programmatic transformations eliminated the need for the facing benches and the partition.

Despite alternative forms, the prototype established by Buckingham in 1768 has come to define the American Friends' meeting house. Buckingham Meeting House is significant because it is the first known example of the doubled meeting house in the Delaware Valley, and possibly the nation. It is also the culmination of the Buckingham Quaker's experimentation with various meeting house forms that, coincidentally, constituted a microcosm of the larger evolution of Friends meeting house design.

History of the Development of Buckingham Friends Meeting House(s)

As one of the three original "Quarters" established by William Penn in his new colony, Bucks Quarter (1684) was among the initial regions of Pennsylvania to be settled. The earliest settlers were primarily members of the Society of Friends. They located in what is now the southern portion of Bucks County, which is closest to Philadelphia. They founded the towns of Bristol, Pennsbury, and Falls (or Fallsington), and established meetings for worship. The first meeting house in this region was erected at Falls on a lot given by William Penn in 1692. It was supposedly of brick construction and measured 20' by 25.' It had a "gallery (facing bench) with banisters" and a chimney lined with sawn boards. Another meeting was held at the governor's

²⁹ As with the religious philosophy of the evangelical movement, Orthodox Friends more whole-heartedly adopted mainstream church architecture.

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house at Pennsbury, and a third at an undisclosed location on the Colchester River.³⁰ Around the turn of the century, a number of Friends from the Falls Meeting migrated northward, settling the areas of Buckingham (currently Lahaska) and Wrightstown. Although an “indulged”³¹ meeting for worship was established in 1701, and a preparative meeting in 1705, for many years the Buckingham Friends continued to travel to Falls for monthly and quarterly meetings.³² Following Quaker tradition, they found it more convenient to meet for Sunday worship in member’s houses while they constructed their own meeting house. In an unpublished manuscript written between 1812-14, Buckingham Quaker Dr. John Watson chronicled the history of the Buckingham Friends. According to Dr. Watson, the first meetings for worship at Buckingham were held at the house of William Cooper, and later removed to the house of James Streater. Their dead were buried on Streater’s land. The meeting was moved yet again, to Nathaniel Bye’s house, still owned by the Bye family.³³

The early decades of settlement were arduous. Watson discussed “the difficulty of beginning in the woods.” Watson noted that with any new settlement the first concerns were erecting a dwelling and clearing land upon which to grow crops. Dr. Watson’s description of an early dwelling provides some insight into the humble living standards of the early Quaker settlers. He wrote, “It is made of stone, and is dug into the earth where there is a moderate descent, about twenty feet by ten or twelve. At the end fronting the southeast was a door leading into the dwelling-room for the whole family, where there was a sort of chimney; and a door at the other end, also level with the ground, led into the loft which must have been the lodging room.”³⁴ Land was cheap and plentiful, and many made their living by farming and by milling. Grain was the principal crop produced. The farmland proved to be the richest in the region, and brought great prosperity to the Buckingham Friends.

In 1705, James Streater donated a ten-acre tract to the Falls Monthly Meeting in order for the Buckingham Friends to establish their own meeting house and burial ground. The property had served as a burying ground before the Quakers acquired it. According to Watson, several more

³⁰ William W.H. Davis, *History of Bucks County Pennsylvania from the discovery of the Delaware to the Present Time*, 2nd ed., Vol. I, 1905, p. 67. This information was provided by a letter from Friends in Pennsylvania to Friends in England, dated March 17, 1683.

³¹ Indulged means that the meeting is under the care of an established meeting, and reflects a probational status that often preceded its status as an official preparative meeting.

³² Pennsylvania Historical Survey, 112-13.

³³ Dr. John Watson, “Description of the Area and Account of Persons and Events,” unpublished manuscript, Friends Historical Library, SC141 Watson MSS, 1812-14, p. 23.

³⁴ Watson, 27.

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settlers arrived in 1704 (including his great-grandfather, Thomas Watson).³⁵ The new arrivals must have constituted enough of an increase to warrant the erection of their own meeting house. The minutes of Falls Monthly Meeting for September 30, 1705 stated that the Friends of the Falls monthly meeting were “building a meeting house at now Buckingham which this meeting approves of and left to the care of it to the Falls meeting.”³⁶ John Watson and Stephen Wilson were appointed to collect subscriptions among the Friends to finance the construction. Stephen Wilson was reportedly the builder.³⁷

In September of 1708, the Buckingham Friends are admonished by the quarterly meeting for not completing their meeting house. They were advised to “get done with speed.”³⁸ As was common during the initial settlement period, they were distracted from completing their meeting house by the establishment of their own houses and farmsteads. (A commemorative plaque marks the location of this early structure, near the southwest corner of the cemetery located to the north rear of the current meeting house.) All that is known of the first meeting house is the following, “....on a clear grassy spot on the west side of a path or road that went winding up the hill they built a Log meeting house near the lower side of ye present grave yard....”³⁹ In all likelihood, this was a small, single-cell structure, sufficient in size to accommodate the initial Quaker community.⁴⁰ The minutes indicate that a log school house was erected about the same time (ca. 1706), although little is known of its history or location.⁴¹

The meeting house was situated along a rural roadway. It was formally laid out beginning in 1711, in response to a petition by the inhabitants of Buckingham and Solebury townships. The road originated at Reading’s Landing on the Delaware River, traveling past the Buckingham Meeting House on its way to Philadelphia where it terminated. Later known as the Old York Road, it was an important transportation route during the colonial era and after. The Buckingham

³⁵ Watson, 30. At the same time, Joseph Fell, Matthew Hughes, John Hill, Ephraim Fenton, Isaac Pennington, and William Pickering. Some presumably came with their families.

³⁶ Falls Monthly Meeting, Minutes, 30th day of the 7th month 1705. A note on dates: except where quoted and in the formal references, the report translates the “Scriptural” (ie. 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. However, no attempt has been made to confirm the modernization of dates derived from secondary sources.

³⁷ *The two Hundredth Anniversary of Buckingham Monthly Meeting*, 15.

³⁸ Davis, p. 254.

³⁹ Watson, 24.

⁴⁰ Almost without exception, extant structures and/or the records of previous structures indicate that the early Delaware Valley meeting houses were single-celled structures with one front entry, often with a second entry to the side (probably to provide separate entries for men and women).

⁴¹ Pennsylvania Historical Survey, 113.

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Friends and the others in the region took their agricultural products to market on this road. The road was an important transportation link within the “community” of Friends, which extended beyond the individual preparative meetings to include the surrounding meetings. The road also facilitated travel from the Buckingham to the Fall Meeting House for monthly and quarterly meetings, and to the other meetings within Bucks Quarter.⁴² Easy access between the meetings provided a more effective system of spiritual and financial support. The Bucks Quarterly Meeting, which Buckingham was a part, included Falls (est.1683), Neshaminy (est.1683), Middletown (est.1706), Buckingham (est.1720), Wrightstown (est.1734), Solebury (1811), and Makefield (est.1820) meetings. When Buckingham Monthly Meeting was established in 1720, it included Wrightstown and Plumstead preparative meetings, and was later joined by Solebury Preparative Meeting.⁴³

As the population increased, the Buckingham Friend’s log meeting house was supplanted by a larger building. The minutes of the monthly meeting for March 7, 1720 record that it was “fully concluded to go forward with *enlarging the meeting house twenty foot square* and appoints John Scarbough, Enoch Pearson and Thomas Canby to agree with the workmen and it is concluded by this meeting to *build no higher than the old meeting house.*”⁴⁴ Several secondary sources state that this quotation refers to an addition made to the original log meeting house, but further evidence suggests otherwise. Although not substantiated by the monthly minutes (and the preparative minutes are no longer extant), Watson outlined another chronology. According to Dr. Watson, “at some time when their Log House was found to be too small they built a frame house a little further up” the hill from the original site. He suggested that this may have taken place around 1710. While the Buckingham Quakers apparently had not amassed the funds necessary to build a more permanent structure, the new building was at least more commodious. Watson noted, “about that time [1720] an addition of a stone house was made to the upper end of (the) frame building to accommodate the women to hold their meetings of business.”⁴⁵

The construction date of the stone addition corresponds with that of the founding of the

⁴² Buckingham later established their own monthly meeting in 1720.

⁴³ Pennsylvania Historical Survey, 111-119, 197.

⁴⁴ Buckingham Monthly Meeting, Minutes, 7th day of the 1st month 1720. The italics are mine.

⁴⁵ Watson, 25. In another version, the chronology is further confused--possibly combining the two other theories by claiming that a *frame* addition was made to the original *log* structure. As Henry Paxson stated, “This (log) meeting house served its purpose until 1720....when it was enlarged by a frame addition. General Davis calls this a new meeting house, but I think he is in error, as the minutes plainly state it was an enlargement. If General Davis is right there will have been four meeting houses here.” Henry D. Paxson, “Buckingham in Revolutionary Time.” Reprinted from the *Bucks County Daily News*, 26 June 1922 (booklet, FHL, p. 4.).

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Women's Monthly Meeting.⁴⁶ Part of a larger pattern of meeting house development in the Delaware Valley, such additions represent an attempt by the Friends to create a building form that allowed for separate men's and women's business meetings. It is also an important step in the evolution of the doubled prototype. The women's meeting section was most likely smaller than the main structure, reflecting the English tradition whereby men and women met together in a single room for worship and the women removed themselves to their meeting room for business. As the minutes indicate, the addition was to be built "*no higher* than the old building." Its lowered height was probably in proportion to its overall diminutive size.⁴⁷

Further evidence for the existence of the 1710 frame meeting house with a stone addition is found in the single-story 22'-square stone structure located to the southwest of the current meeting house. This structure is likely the remains of the 1720 women's meeting addition, the more fragile wood section having been long since removed. Its size and proportions are in keeping with the standard women's meeting.⁴⁸ Its proximity to an old roadbed and mounting block provides further support. In a brief history of the meeting written in 1922, this structure is described as "*the little stone horse stable*" located approximately seventy feet from the Meeting House door.⁴⁹ It was not uncommon for meeting houses that had outlived their usefulness to be adapted in such a manner. It is also interesting to note that when the third meeting house burned in 1768, the Friends held the following meeting in "the stable at Buckingham."⁵⁰

As with the first meeting house, it took some time to actually complete the addition. The minutes for May 4, 1725 discussed the collection of subscriptions for and the construction of "the Stone end of the Buckingham old Meeting house." The addition to the meeting house coincided with the establishment of their own monthly meeting. This came as a result of the growing number of

⁴⁶ According to *The Two Hundredth Anniversary of Buckingham Monthly Meeting*, it is stated: "The Women's Monthly Meeting was established three years after the men's, in 1723. From that time until 1891 they held separate meetings for business," 22-23.

⁴⁷ An extant example is found at Radnor, Pennsylvania. The Radnor Meeting House (1718) is a single-cell three-bay by-three-bay structure to which was added a lower, two-bay long addition for women's business meeting.

⁴⁸ The first Wrightstown Meeting House, erected in 1721, was enlarged by a 20' square addition in 1735. Other examples include Radnor, Plymouth and Old Haverford meeting houses.

⁴⁹ Paxson, 9. Currently used as a utility shed, the only reference to its use historically was as a stable. This is noteworthy, as other sources have suggested that former meeting houses often were put to use as stable buildings. Historian Robert H. Wilson noted, "When new brick meeting houses were built, the old log or frame ones often became shelters for horses or carriages." Wilson includes a photographic example in Centreville, Delaware. Robert H. Wilson. *Philadelphia Quakers, 1681-1981* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1981), 103

⁵⁰ T. Chalkley Matlack. "Brief Historical Sketches concerning Friends' Meetings of the Past and Present with special reference to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting," (Unpublished; the original volumes are located at The Quaker Collection, Haverford College Library; copy available at Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College), 10. Matlack quoted from the Buckingham Monthly Minutes during the 5th month of 1768.

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Friends to this region.⁵¹ As reported in the Falls Monthly minutes for November 24, 1720:

Whereas, friends, of Buckingham, has hitherto belonged to the Falls Monthly Meeting, now, being pretty much increased in number & haveing [sic], for a long time, with some hardship, traveled a great way, moves to have a Monthly Meeting of their own, Notwithstanding the Falls friends were loath to be deprived of their good Company & assistance; Yet this meeting haveing [sic] taken their Request & Reasons into Consideration; Consents to their Proposals [sic] and allows them to have a Monthly Meeting of their own.⁵²

The newly enlarged meeting house soon proved inadequate, most likely due to an increase in population. Watson noted that most of the original tracts were settled and improved before 1720. Within the next decade, the same was true of the neighboring area of Plumstead.⁵³ At the May 6, 1729 monthly meeting, the construction of a new meeting house was discussed. The minutes discussed the collection of subscriptions towards a new meeting house. In anticipation, a new and more suitable plot of ground was purchased. A committee was appointed "to carry on the said work with the Meetings approbation." The committee consisted of Joseph Fell, Jacob Holcombe & Thomas Canby.⁵⁴

Dr. Watson's narrative confirms the construction of this meeting house. He stated, "This arrangement (of the frame and stone meeting house) continued until 1731 when a pretty large Stone House was built a little higher up the hill and a stone addition at the upper end one story high for the women." Watson noted that, "having generally passed over the era of necessity that attended the first settlement," the new meeting house was built of more substantial local stone.⁵⁵ Watson's brief description suggests a meeting house very similar in plan to the one it replaced. It included a women's meeting, subservient to the main block but forming a two-cell structure.⁵⁶

A disagreement arose over the appropriate site for the 1731 meeting house. The reason for the

⁵¹ The need to accommodate additional persons in order to convene a monthly or quarterly meeting resulted in a number meeting houses being either enlarged or replaced during this period. The Wrightstown Friends, part of the Buckingham Monthly Meeting, built their own meeting house the following year. Buckingham Monthly Meeting, Minutes, 25 day 3rd mo. 1721. Within the Bucks Quarter, Wrightstown Meeting House received an addition in 1735, as did Bristol in 1756. Falls built a new meeting house in 1728, and Makefield built their first meeting house in 1752. A similar pattern of expansion during this time period is seen throughout the Philadelphia region.

⁵² Falls Monthly Meeting, Minutes, 24th day of the 9th month 1720.

⁵³ Watson, 39.

⁵⁴ Buckingham Monthly Meeting, Minutes, 6th day 3rd month 1729.

⁵⁵ Watson, 37.

⁵⁶ If it was a meeting house that was actually conceived of and erected as a two-celled structure--although lacking the equal proportions of the current Buckingham Meeting House-- it represents another crucial phase in the evolution to the development of the current prototype.

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debate was not given. Many of the friends wanted to build on the site of the current meeting house. Thomas Canby Jr. went so far as to purchase the plot of land. The reluctance of some to erect the meeting house on this site may have been a factor of orientation. The original log structure was sited north of the Old York Road. While the road originally ran to the rear of the meeting house, it later was diverted to the south (front). Siting a meeting house on the south side of the road made the traditional south-facing orientation awkward because the meeting house would had to have had its back to the road (as Buckingham originally did).⁵⁷ The road also separated the burying ground from the meeting house. (Although the debate did not hinder construction, the issue would emerge once again, while planning for the current meeting house.)

The Buckingham Friends continued to grow in faith and prosperity. The Buckingham meeting included a number of gifted ministers and traveling Friends.⁵⁸ Buckingham Meeting's book of "Discipline and Advices" (1719-80) gives some insight into their meetings for worship: "Although our meetings are sometime held in silence, yet let not that discourage us from assembling ourselves together remembering that such silence is necessary in order to wait upon God for a due preparation of heart (which is his work) to worship him, and to speak & hear with steadiness & a good understanding as well as for Retrospection, Recollection & self examination to find how matters stand between God & our souls, and that we may be duly exercised in mental prayer to him for the things we may see & feel we want."⁵⁹

In terms of their secular life, the local economy was based upon agricultural production and trade. Wheat was the most valuable commodity, and thus became a medium of exchange. For example, Improved land was sold for 20 bushels of wheat per acre.⁶⁰ The land was extremely fertile and so the people were "blessed with a plentiful increase."⁶¹ This prosperity was reflected in their higher standard of living. With the construction of the new stone meeting house in 1731, several stone dwelling houses were built in the Friends community as well.⁶² The newly erected frame houses were not like the crude dwellings of the early settlement period. They were covered with staved clapboards, and had plastered interiors, hand-sawn wood floors, and

⁵⁷ This may help explain why Buckingham essentially has two "front" elevations. The front and rear of the meeting house are nearly identical.

⁵⁸ Watson, 26. Watson lists the following individuals, all of whom were ministers of Buckingham Meeting: Jacob Holcomb, John Scarbrough, Samuel Eastburn, Joshua Ely, Benjamin Fell, Enoch Paxson, Edmond Kinsey, Abigail Paxson, Elizabeth Fell, Phebe Ely, formerly Phebe Smith, Jane Bradfield, Ann Schoffield. "Traveling Friends" is a general reference to ministers who often traveled from meeting house to meeting house.

⁵⁹ Located at the Friends Historical Library.

⁶⁰ Watson, 39, 36.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁶² These included the homes of Joseph Fell, Thomas Canby, John Watson, Joseph Larges, and Henry Paxson.

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partitions walls.”⁶³

In the 1750s, the war between England and France came to America. As previously discussed, it was a particularly difficult period for the Quakers of the Delaware Valley. The imposition of war-related taxes and an influx of militia through the region came in direct conflict with the Quaker’s passivist stance, or their testimony regarding peace. Friends had always controlled the Pennsylvania Assembly, but most forfeited their seats rather than support the war cause. The Buckingham Friends enjoyed increasing prosperity due to the war efforts. The influx of foreign money to finance the war and purchase provisions improved trade significantly, increasing the price for wheat and other cash crops.⁶⁴ Their wealth was compounded by the creation of new markets for their agricultural products. In the 1760s, locally produced Indian (corn) meal was exported from Philadelphia. Wheat was sent to France, and corn to the West Indies, and all at prices higher than previously obtained. New products, such as potatoes and livestock feed, were produced and exported.⁶⁵ Lime-rich fertilizers, a by-product of the limestone industry that began in Buckingham Township in the 1760s, further boosted agricultural productivity. Thus, the Buckingham Friends were not immune to the prosperity and “worldly” influence that had given rise to the spiritual reform movement of the mid century.

The influx of foreign money and goods during the war greatly impacted the community. It created both a desire for luxury items and the means of obtaining them. Reflecting upon the history of a half-century before, Dr. Watson lamented the taste for material (particularly foreign) goods that had overtaken the Buckingham Quakers. New-found luxuries were replacing their traditional Quaker gray apparel, homespun cloth, and plain-style furnishings. Household and personal luxuries created marked distinctions between the rich and poor Friends. As Dr. Watson summarized, “The vigilance of domestick (sic) economy was abating.”⁶⁶ Disputes arose over

⁶³ Ibid., 39.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 43. Wheat, for example, was increased in price from six shillings to a dollar a Bushel.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 47.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 44-46. Watson contended that “there are but few men and fewer women left as perfect patterns of the Genuine old fashioned sort of People.” He also seems to feel that with increased prosperity came disharmony. He described what he views as the breakdown of the sense of community that bound the early Buckingham Quakers together. He stated, “Altho in the period now treated of one year might not appear to have produced much alteration from the year past yet a considerable change was progressively advancing in the general state of the society and the manners of the people and tho they were but yet preparing the way for future advances yet in that stage of said business marks of ostentation and false show of greatness beyond their proper station evidently appeared. The vigilance of domestick (sic) economy was abating-- and as ranks became formed (between the have and have-nots) or something that had that effect The general mass of the people were not so much united (with) an universal Harmony as they has been. Descendants of the same common stock became estranged from each other & acquaintance was not so frequently kept up on the ground of real friendship.”

It is important to note that Watson, writing in 1812, was a product of reform era Quakerism. The ideas expressed here reflect the popular sentiment of the times regarding the negative effects of prosperity and worldliness upon Quaker testimonies and practices.

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how these items affected their testimony regarding simplicity. Material wealth created rifts between those that embraced the old ways and those that did not.

During this era of prosperity, the Buckingham Friends began planning for the current meeting house. In March of 1761, the monthly meeting minutes noted, "Buckingham Preparative Meeting sent up in their report that the necessity of something being done to the Meeting House & towards properly securing the Lands thereunto belonging had come under their consideration." A committee was appointed by the Quarterly Meeting to "assist with their Advice relating to our Meeting House." In 1762, the committee reported that the "most convenient" place upon which to erect the new Meeting House was on the hill on the South side of the road (road later averted to the north side), approximately twenty-five Perches from the burying ground.⁶⁷ Despite the committee's decision, the debates continued over the site selection for another six years. During those intervening years, the members continued to meet in the old structure.

In November 1767, the minutes indicate that they are ready to proceed with the construction of the new meeting house. Through subscription, 554 pounds was raised, and Joseph Watson, Thomas Bye, Isaac Pickering & Henry Paxson were appointed to direct the work.⁶⁸ The masonry and plasterwork, and undoubtedly at least a fair portion of the design, were the work of local master builder Mathias Hutchinson, of nearby Solebury. Hutchinson, a member of Buckingham Meeting, was also responsible for the Buckingham School erected just east of the meeting house in 1794, as well as other buildings in the area. The carpentry for the meeting house was the work of Edward Good of Plumstead.⁶⁹ By early December 1767, they were able to report that some progress had been made. A committee was created to raise additional subscriptions needed to move forward.⁷⁰

Although the construction of the *new* meeting house evidently proceeded without incident, there was a fire that spring in the old meeting house. The minutes give little account of the fire. They merely stated that the monthly meeting for May of 1768 was held in the stable at Buckingham,

⁶⁷ The debate resulted in much bad feeling, and the lack of consensus was considered shameful. As recorded in the minutes, "There is a great disgracement amongst you concerning the Place whereon to set the Building and considering the danger & Hurt that may arise to a Religious Society if such Disunion should subsist-- We Advise that Friends endeavour to divest themselves of private Views & consider what may most contribute to the general good of Friends and be more Unanimous before they undertake the Work." Buckingham Monthly Meeting, Minutes, 1st day 2nd month 1762.

⁶⁸ Buckingham Monthly Meeting, Minutes, 2nd day 11th month 1767.

⁶⁹ Davis, 255. Davis also mentions that he was the father of Nathan Good. Only other information on the Good family is mentioned in Matlack, Bk. I, p. 10, which states that Edward Good was the grandfather of Pearson Good who for so many years was the caretaker for the meeting house and grave yard.

⁷⁰ According to the minutes, "Meeting appoints Thomas Watson & Philip Paisy(?) For Buckingham & Joseph Eastburn & Joseph Paxson for Solebury to collect subscriptions for the Purpose & pay thereunto the Hands of Joseph Watson." Buckingham Monthly Meeting, Minutes, 7th day of the 12th month 1767.

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the meeting house having burned since last meeting. Later sources claim that the building caught fire “from a stone” probably being used to heat the building during meeting.⁷¹ Another account stated that the building only was destroyed partially.⁷² Even if so, it evidently was razed rather than adapted for reuse. After the fire, meetings for worship (or first-day meetings) be held at the house of Benjamin Williams.⁷³ Monthly meetings were held for the next eight months at Plumstead, and the quarterly meetings were held at Wrightstown while awaiting the completion of the new meeting house.

In January 1769, it was reported that the new meeting house was expected to be ready to accommodate the next monthly meeting. Thereafter, the monthly meetings would return to Buckingham.⁷⁴ The Friends must have been pleased with their notably handsome and innovative structure. As was indicative of the Friends attitude towards the material world, however, no further mention of the new Buckingham Meeting House is made. T. Chalkley Matlack’s compendium of Delaware Valley Meeting Houses, noted that a “Visiting Friend” of the period referred to Buckingham as one of the “most substantial and imposing country meeting houses in seven of our states.”⁷⁵ Four months after completion, the minutes merely indicated that the building is nearly complete (although clearly in use) and a committee was appointed to settle all accounts.⁷⁶

The Georgian design’s emphasis on symmetry and restrained detailing made it a style suited to meeting house design. Its sophisticated application to this particular meeting house may be attributed to the Buckingham Friends’ affluence and worldly outlook. In addition to its aesthetic merits, Buckingham’s plan was the most conducive to the new American Friends program. For these reasons, it became a model for Friends Meeting House design throughout the mid-Atlantic region. Despite its innovative plan and stylish facade, the new design acknowledged old patterns. Upon close examination, the women’s meeting (east section) is found to be 5'-9"

⁷¹ Matlack, 10. Some sources claim that the meeting house was burned to the ground, however, the remnant of an earlier meeting structure, probably the women’s business addition, still stands. This may also have been the “stable” structure the Buckingham Friends met in after the fire, and therefore have been part of the second, rather than the third, women’s meeting addition.

⁷² Pennsylvania Historical Survey, 113.

⁷³ Davis, 255.

⁷⁴ Buckingham Monthly Meeting, Minutes, 2nd day of the 1st month 1769.

⁷⁵ Matlack, Book 1, 10. “Visiting Friends” is a reference to the Quaker equivalent of a minister, also referred to as “Public Friends” or “Traveling Friends.” They were, in effect, the early ministers or apostles, traveling from meeting house to meeting house—and often from state to state. Visiting Friends served as the vehicle through which Quaker beliefs and practices were transmitted. They served as a unifying force within the Society of Friends. Thus, they may have helped to transmit appropriate designs for meeting houses.

⁷⁶ The total cost, including property, materials, and workmanship came to 736 pounds & 14 shillings.

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narrower than the men's meeting. The discrepancy might be an expression of their understanding of, and respect for, earlier meeting house forms and the conventions that shaped them. The slight disproportion in the symmetry is evidence of the Friends' deeply rooted traditionalism. Regardless of the lack of discussion concerning the physical structure, the fact that their meeting house has stood for 230 years clearly demonstrates the Buckingham Quakers' fervent regard for their history. This regard is still evident today in the pristine condition of the meeting house and the preservation of remnants of the past such as the earlier stone structure, the old mounting blocks, and horse sheds. For those outside the Quaker community, the old meeting house stands as a symbol of the Friends' prominent position within the time line of Pennsylvania history.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: Casting off the more vernacular appearance of most early meeting houses, Buckingham's design was influenced by the Georgian-style of architecture. Meeting houses are generally vernacular in design, adopting building traditions and materials indigenous to the area in which they were erected. The overall form of many early meeting houses--consisting of a single-cell structure supplemented by a smaller women's meeting--was reflective of the telescoping buildings that came to define much of the early domestic architecture of the Delaware Valley. The Georgian emphasis on restrained classical detailing and symmetrical balance lent itself to the new meeting house design. Buckingham Meeting House is the embodiment of a balanced composition. The front elevation is six-bays wide with dual entryways. When bisected, each half constitutes a self-contained unit, hence the term "doubled" form.⁷⁷ The fenestration of the south front is repeated to the north rear, essentially giving the meeting house two "fronts" (a traditional south-facing (true) front, and a (rear) street or carriage front). While this feature is typical in finer Georgian houses, the two fronts are unusual to Friends meeting houses. The design contributes to the domestic quality of this building. The rear doorways were referred to as "carriage doors," and appear on some early meeting houses.⁷⁸ The symmetry of the exterior is echoed in the interior plan,

⁷⁷ The doubling is unlike the traditional five-bay-wide Georgian design, which achieves its symmetry by slicing through the single, centrally located front entryway.

⁷⁸ The purpose of the carriage doors is unclear; most likely they allow women to dismount from their carriages or horses directly into the meeting house. Their location suggests that they provided entry for the minister, elders and overseers that occupied the facing benches implying a hierarchy that seems contrary to Quaker philosophy. In the case of Buckingham, a plausible explanation could be the fact that the York Road used to run straight up Lahaska Hill to the rear of the meeting house, rather than along its current course to the front. Although now closed over, a carriage door appeared at the level of the facing bench at Old Kennett (1731) and at Bradford (1765) Meeting Houses in Pennsylvania. Carriage doors are still extant at Plymouth (1708, 1780), and Abington (1786, 1797) meeting houses. The doors appear in later revivals of the earlier type meeting houses, as seen in Upper Dublin (1814) and Upper Providence (1828). Carriage doors were more prevalent in New

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which consists of a single large room divided by a partition into two nearly equal parts. Both sections have the same axial plan with cross aisles terminated by doorways. The balanced plan is accentuated by the interior fittings and furnishings, with each side containing identical wainscoting, stairways, facing benches, allowances for stoves, and other features.

Other noteworthy features of Georgian architecture displayed at Buckingham Meeting House are the pedimented hoods over the doorways, the quoining, and the pent roof in the gable ends. These Georgian architectural features frequently are found in the mid-Atlantic colonies, but the hood, in particular, was indicative of early Friends Meeting House architecture (though few retain them). Architecturally Buckingham is among the most finely articulated meeting houses in the Delaware Valley. The refinement exhibited in the design of the Buckingham Meeting House generally was found only in urban meeting houses. Its appearance in a "country" counterpart is probably a reflection the affluence of the Buckingham Friends.

2. Condition of Fabric: The Buckingham Meeting House appears to be exceptionally well preserved and maintained.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The Buckingham Friends Meeting House is a large two-story, six-bay-by-three-bay stone structure with a gable roof. It measures 65' in length and 39'-11" in depth, and it rises 37' 7-1/2" to the roof ridge. The virtually identical south front and north rear elevations are symmetrically balanced with entries located in the second and fifth bays respectively. There is a centrally located entry that are flanked by windows at both the east and west side elevations. The doorways are covered with pedimented hoods, with the exception of the east side elevation where a porch now runs its length.

2. Foundations: The foundations are of rough-cut coursed stone.

3. Walls: The walls are of rough-cut coursed stone. They are slightly more random in coursing to the sides and rear compared to the south front. The south front is also the only elevation ornamented by a water table. There is rough quoining at all corners of the building. In the east gable end of the meeting house is a date stone with a round-arched lintel and stepped quoining. It simply reads: "1768."

4. Structural system, framing: The meeting house is constructed of load-bearing masonry with a heavy timber-frame structural system. The roof structure consists of five large

Jersey were they appear in numerous meeting houses including Salem (1772), Chesterfield (1773), Mt. Holly (1775), and Alloways Creek (1784).

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king-post trusses, the base of which are formed by large summer beams. The trusses are held with pegged joints. The base of the king post and the individual truss members are marked with corresponding roman numerals for ease of assembly. The trusses support the principal rafters, intersected by purlins (two across) to support the secondary rafters. Lath, holding the roof shingles, is applied to the tops of the rafters. The king-post is reinforced with flanking wood braces, held by pegs. There are additional braces near the ends of the truss to support the weight of the purlins. There are twenty-two joists across the base of the attic. They are pegged into the collar beams and labeled with roman numerals. To the front and rear of the structure, shorter members run perpendicular to the joists, allowing the roof to kick out over the stone walls to form a deep overhanging exterior cornice.⁷⁹

5. Porches, stoops: The pair of entryways on the south front and north rear elevations, and the one on the west side, are all covered with pedimented hoods, a feature typical of early Friends meeting houses in the Delaware Valley. An example of the nailing blocks that hold the hoods in place is visible at the east side entryway where the hood is removed. Stoops, formed by large rough-cut stones, are located at the south front and west side doorways. The stone steps at the south front elevation pyramid outward, and are joined by splines. Stone steps provide access to the doorways at the north rear elevation. A shed roof porch, supported by chamfered posts set on wood plinths resting on stone blocks, covers the east elevation. It also provides shelter for the privy to the north end. The porch has a concrete floor with steps and a handicapped access ramp.

6. Chimneys: There are two interior brick chimneys, centered along the roof ridge. The stacks rest on the summer beams in the attic so as not to interrupt the meeting space below. Stove pipes connected the chimney stacks to the stoves which provided heat. The stove in the west section of the meeting house remains in place, but the one in the east section is gone. The original, shallow chimney stacks to the top and center of the gable end walls are still visible in the attic. The stacks are splayed, extending approximately 12" at the top and narrowing to 3"-4" at the base.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: There are two symmetrically placed entryways at both the south front and north rear facades of the meeting house. They are located in the second and fifth bays of the six bay facades. They all have plain wood surrounds with butt joints, and a simple architrave molding along the outer edge. The sills are wood. The doorways, flush with the exterior wall, accommodate double doors. The front doors are constructed of wide, vertical planks with a

⁷⁹ Whether a regional or Quaker building practice, it is not known, but the same perpendicular extension of the floor joists appears at Radnor Meeting House (1718).

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beaded edge. The rear doors are three panel. All doors were left unpainted on the interior, and have thumb-latch iron hardware. The doorways to the rear are slightly narrower, and although they correspond in location to the front doorways, they are elevated slightly to provide entrance onto the uppermost level of the facing benches that run along the interior that wall.

b. Windows and shutters: The first-story windows are twelve-over-twelve-light sash, and those on the second story are eight-over-eight light. The windows have plain wood surrounds with a simple architrave trim and wood sills. The first-story windows have arched stone lintels, while those in the second story are located directly under the cornice. Top hinged, two-light storm windows have been added to the windows. All the windows have paneled shutters, held back by notched wood bars inserted at the base of the windows. Corresponding to the varying window size, the shutters on the first story are three-panel, and those on the second story are two-panel. Access to the attic is provided by batten doors in the west and east gable ends (located just south of center to avoid the original chimney stacks).

8. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: The meeting house has a side-gable roof with a pent in the gable ends. The roofs, including those on the pants and hoods, are covered with slate.

b. Cornice, eaves: The roof has overhanging eaves and a large cornice with an oversized cove molding.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

a. First floor plan: The interior of the meeting house consists of a single large room that can be divided by a retractable wood-paneled partition into two, nearly equal-sized meeting rooms (the men's meeting to the west side measures 40' deep by 35'-8" wide, and the women's meeting to the east is 40' deep by 29'-11" wide). The room is open to a gallery above, which can be reached by way of staircases located in the southeast and southwest corners. A tiered "facing bench" runs the length of the north rear wall, interrupted at various locations to allow for steps providing access.

b. Gallery plan: A gallery, with fixed, tiered benches, runs the length of the south

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front and east and west sides of the meeting house. The gallery narrows to a passageway along the north rear wall.

2. Stairways: There are two identical stairways that provide access from the meeting rooms to the gallery. They are located in the southeast and southwest corners of the meeting house. Both consist of two runs joined by winders. The first run is an open string with a balustrade that consists of a wide, carved handrail, plain squared newel posts, and rounded balusters set on square plinths (two per step). There is a doorway at the top of the first run, with paired doors constructed of beaded boards. The second string is partially enclosed, opening up into the gallery but separated from it by a low partition wall. Like the other wood features in the meeting house, the stairway woodwork has been left unfinished.

3. Flooring: The floors are of random-width, unfinished wood. A temporary flooring is laid across the gallery opening during the winter months in the interest of heat conservation. Joists are fitted into notches along the gallery floor and the top tier of the partition, and the large panels that form the flooring are laid upon them. There is an inlaid brick pad to the center of each of the two meeting rooms that the stoves were placed on (the east stove is since removed).

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Wainscoting, constructed of unfinished, beaded-board white cedar is placed along the walls.⁸⁰ It is higher along the north rear wall, between the rear doors, to accommodate the raised facing benches. The walls above the wainscoting are plastered and painted white.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: Corresponding doorways are located, two each, at the south front and north rear walls, and one each at the east and west side walls. The doorways form the terminus for the cross aisles that regulate traffic through the meeting house. On the north rear, the doorways are elevated to the top level of the tiered facing benches. All doorways are recessed with plain, plastered reveals, and have simple wood surrounds with butt joints. There are double doors all around. They are constructed of vertical boards held by nails with wrought heads. They have wrought-iron strap hinges, Suffolk latches and slide bolts. Large iron hooks support wood members used to bar the (south) front doors. The interiors of all the doors have been left unpainted. (For a description of doorways in the partition and on the stairways, see those sections).

⁸⁰ Paxson, 6. He states that the interior wood work is of white cedar, probably hauled from southern New Jersey.

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b. Windows: The windows are recessed with plain, plaster reveals. The deep reveals, have wood sills and wainscoting, and form a window seat. Like the doorways, the surrounds consist of plain, unfinished wood with butt joints.

6. Benches: A two-tiered platform of three rows of fixed “facing benches” lines the north rear wall, interrupted near the partition and at the ends to accommodate steps. The facing benches, a salient feature of all Friends meeting houses, allowed for oversight by the ministers, elders and overseers. The benches are of plain unfinished wood with curving bench ends (see HABS drawings for sample bench profile). There is a foot rest along the backs of the facing benches. A collapsing clerk’s desk is located on the lower tier. There is also a single row of fixed benches along the south front, and the east and west side walls. Fixed benches are also in the gallery. The remainder are moveable. The benches are built of poplar. Many of the benches have carved graffiti on them, which primarily takes the form of dates and initials, some dating back to the late-eighteenth century.

7. Partition: A large, wood paneled retractable partition divides the meeting house into two rooms. The bottom portion runs the depth of the building, from the (near) center of the south front to the north rear wall, and rises up to the level of the gallery floor. It consists of seven sections of three panels each. The bottom section is fixed, while the top two retract upward. A separate section of paneled partition divides the gallery, and pivots on center to open. The partition panels show a more decorative face on the west side where they are raised (they are flush to the east side). The partition is made of unfinished white cedar. There are two doorways in the bottom section of the partition. One is located to the center and the other at the base of the facing benches. The center doorway has a bi-fold, paneled door on one side and a single paneled door on the other. The doorway at the base of the facing benches has a pair of narrow, paneled doors with wrought-iron latches.

8. Mechanical Equipment:

a. Heating: About thirty-five years ago hot water, base-board heating was installed around the walls and under the benches; the furnace is located in the small stone structure to the southwest of the meeting house. Prior to the furnace, heat was dispensed by means of two wood-burning stoves.

b. Lighting: Electricity was installed during the twentieth century. Electric lighting replaced the kerosene lamps that afforded lighting in the earlier days.⁸¹

c. Plumbing: Water is supplied by a well and pump installed near the school

⁸¹ Peter Barry, former headmaster of the Buckingham Friends School, interview with author, on site at Buckingham Friends Meeting House, July 1997.

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building in ca. 1935. The privies also received plumbing, converting them into men's and women's restrooms.

D. Site:

1. Historic landscape design: For nearly 300 years, this property has been the site of the Buckingham Meeting. It includes a meeting house, burying ground, and other associated buildings. The site was used initially as a burying ground, when the Buckingham Meeting was established by the first Quaker settlers to this area in 1701. The current meeting house is probably the fourth on the property. The location of the Old York Road and various approaches to the meeting houses have changed over time. The current historic landscape incorporates numerous remnants of the past, many providing clues to former patterns of use.

The site of the original log meeting house (completed in 1708), in the southwest corner of the cemetery, is denoted by an historical marker. According to Watson, who provides the most complete historical overview of the Buckingham meeting houses, this site is located just north of the old roadbed (or perhaps, as Watson suggests, northwest), suggesting a south or east facing structure. As he states, "on a clear grassy spot on the west side of a path or road that went winding up the hill they built a Log meeting house near the lower side of ye present grave yard...."

Between 1708 and 1731, when their Log House was found to be too small, the Buckingham Friends built a frame house a little further up the hill from the original site. A square-shaped stone addition later was made to accommodate the women's meeting. Although the location of this meeting house is not certain, it is likely that the women's meeting section may be the structure that still sits to the southwest of the current meeting house (now used as a utility shed). Sitting close by the stone structure is a mounting block, which were generally located near the women's section of meeting houses to assist them in dismounting their horses.

In ca. 1731, "a pretty large Stone House" was erected further up the hill. The house's site selection was much debated, although it is unclear why. According to Watson many of the Friends wanted that building erected on the same spot as the current meeting house. One member, Thomas Canby Jr., went so far as to purchase a piece of land. According to Watson, he did so "for the purpose of building at least on a somewhat better place than the old spot, to which the prejudices of some were strongly attached." Like the earlier house, the final location of this structure is not known. The mounting block that sits to the west of the current meeting house may be an indicator. The site of the current meeting house was determined in consultation with the quarterly meeting. As was recorded, "We are of Opinion that the most convenient Place to set a new Meeting House on is on the

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Hill on the South side of the Road about twenty five Perches from the Grave Yard.”⁸²

The Buckingham Friends Meeting House sits atop Lahaska Hill and faces south onto York Road. This roadway, one of the oldest in the region, was a major thoroughfare to Philadelphia. It stretched from Read’s Landing on the Delaware River through the town of Lahaska where the Buckingham Meeting House is located and on to Philadelphia. York Road has had a significant impact on the development of both the town and the meeting house site. The road provided a transportation route for trade through the area, helping to bring the region’s agricultural goods to market. This and other connecting roadways also provided the Quaker community with a transportation network that linked the individual preparative with the larger monthly and quarterly meetings. Frequent interaction within the extended community through a system of regular meetings was crucial to the religious and social functions of the Society of Friends. Travel by carriage or horseback between meetings could prove difficult, however, especially in inclement weather and/or under poor road conditions.

York Road was reconfigured to its current course ca. 1800. The former roadbed is visible in the contemporary landscape. Traveling along the south side of the cemetery wall it then proceeded behind the caretakers cottage (formerly a carriage shed) approximately fifty paces north of the meeting house. Its original course cut straight up the hill to the rear of the current meeting house rather than curving around to its front. It continued along the ridge of the hill, probably coming close to the rear of the school house, continuing east towards Lahaska, leaving a ditch near the current bus entrance.⁸³ A drive from York Road to the meeting house is visible to the west of the meeting house. An antiquated mounting block sits along its course. Just below the point where the drive currently emerges from the woods and enters the clearing are the remains of the women’s meeting section of a previous meeting house.

The continual relocation of the meeting house site (and the debate over it) was most likely a factor of the former location of York Road, and the desire to take advantage of a southern exposure. As if conducive to the facilitation of ones “inner light,” natural lighting plays an important role in meeting house design and orientation. In order to provide optimum lighting during morning meeting for worship, almost every Friends meeting house in the Delaware Valley has been erected with a south facing front elevation.⁸⁴ Locating a meeting house to the *south side* of the road, would make it

⁸² Buckingham Monthly Meeting, Minutes, 1st day 2nd month 1762.

⁸³ U.S. Dept of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. “Buckingham Township, Bucks County, Pennsylvania; Historic Resources Survey, Determination of Eligibility, and Determination of Effect Report,” (unpublished report, 1995), 1.

⁸⁴ The only exceptions appear to be those meeting houses constricted by urban lot configurations.

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difficult to provide for the requisite southern exposure. Although the current meeting house was located in such a manner, it was built with its *back* facing the road, in order to maintain a south-facing orientation. Perhaps as a compromise, it was erected with two fronts; a south-facing *true front*, and a road or carriage front.

2. Cemetery: The burying ground located to the north rear of the current meeting house was used prior to the erection of the first meeting house in 1705-08. Friends traditionally did not mark graves much before the nineteenth century. Therefore there are many more internments than appearances suggest. A 1706 entry in Buckingham Meeting's "Yearly Meeting Discipline & Advices," stated, "This meeting do give as their sense of Judgement that it is altogether wrong and of evil tendency for to have any grave stones or any other sort of monument over or about the graves in any of the Friends burying grounds." A later entry, in 1729, gives more explanation for this practice, "Tho it was the early care of Friends to advise & caution against the vanity & superstition of erecting monuments & entombing the dead with singular notes or marks of distinction which is but worldly pomp & grandeur: for no encomiums nor pompous interments add worth to the deceased."⁸⁵

The boundaries of the burial ground are indicated less by grave markers than by the stone walls that surround them. Funds for the construction of a burying ground wall were raised through subscription in 1752, at which time walls were erected along three sides.⁸⁶ During the Revolutionary War the meeting house was used as a hospital and the dead were interred in the burying ground. In 1856, many of these bodies unearthed by the turnpike company grading Buckingham Hill, and were reinterred further up the hill.⁸⁷ Other burials outside the Quaker community include an area was set aside in 1808 for the burial of African-Americans.

3. Outbuildings: The site includes a number of associated historic structures, as well as a few non-historic building erected for use by the school.

a. Privy: Located at the northeast corner of the meeting house is the privy. It is a single-story, one-bay-by-one-bay, 13' square stone structure. It has a gable-front roof which rises to a height of 13'-11" and is covered with slate. The doorway is to the center of the south front elevation. Louvered ventilators are located on the east, west, and north sides. The privy is compatible with the meeting house in

⁸⁵ Buckingham Monthly Meeting, *Yearly Meeting Discipline & Advices, 1719-80*. Hand-written volume, FHL RG 2/PH/B8, p. 91.

⁸⁶ Pennsylvania Historical Survey, 113.

⁸⁷ Paxson, 9.

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both style and craftsmanship. Originally a four-hole sand-pit privy, it has been updated with modern plumbing to provide separate men's and women's restrooms.

b. Former Women's Meeting (utility shed): Perhaps most significant to the historical context of the meeting house is what is likely the remnant of an earlier women's meeting structure.⁸⁸ Located a short distance from the southwest corner of the current meeting house, it is a single-story, one-bay, 22' square stone structure. There are doorways in the east and west gable ends, and small, four-light casement windows in the north and south walls. All other bays have been filled in, and much reworking of the stonework is apparent. The building is now being used as a utility shed to house the heating system for the meeting house.

c. Carriage/horse sheds: There are two historic carriage sheds located to the north and northeast of the meeting house. The shed located directly to the north was converted into a caretaker's house. The second is used as a garage and maintenance shed.

d. School: Located to the east of the meeting house is the school building that was constructed by Mathias Hutchinson in 1794. This significant structure provided for the "guarded" education of Quaker children, helping to insure adherence to Quaker values through select instruction in an atmosphere shielded from mainstream society. The school is a two-story structure with a gable roof. The school was enlarged several times in the twentieth century. In 1935, an addition of three rooms, designed by Arthur Bye, was made to the northeast corner. In 1946, the library was added to the rear at the basement level. In 1960, during an overall remodeling of the building, the present offices, restrooms and a fire stair were added.⁸⁹ Other modern, non-historic buildings associated with the Buckingham Friends School include: the gymnasium (1953), Lower School building, for grades K through 2 (1956, 1958); and the Fine Arts Building (1980).

e. Mounting blocks: On site are three mounting or upping blocks, to facilitate the mounting and dismounting of horses. The first, and probably the oldest, sits to the southwest of the meeting house, near what now serves as a utility shed. The fact that the shed is situated near this mounting block is a further indication that it

⁸⁸ Although no documentation was found to confirm its original use, two such structures appeared on the property over the course of its history, corresponding in size and configuration with the current structure (see historical context section). It would have to be either the 1720 addition, or the women's meeting from the 1731 meeting house. However, if the 1720 building was being used as a stable in 1768, then the building that burned was the then current meeting house of 1731. The frame ca. 1710 meeting house had probably been razed too long ago to be remembered, and the stone section adapted for reuse.

⁸⁹ Peter Barry, "Buckingham Meeting House and School House," undated printed pamphlet.

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is the remnant of an earlier meeting house. Another mounting block is found to the west of the meeting house, along the abandoned roadbed that probably served as a drive from the former York Road to the meeting house. Its placement may also indicate the site of an earlier meeting house (that of ca. 1731). The third mounting block is located to the northeast corner of the current meeting house, set against the south facade of the privy, at the far east (or women's meeting) side of the structure.

f. Buckingham Friends Meeting House, Orthodox: Another structure significant to the Buckingham Meeting is the Buckingham Orthodox Friends Meeting House. It is not located on the same site, but just down York Road. After a 1827 schism that divided the Friends into two camps, the majority of Buckingham Friends sided with the Hicksites, retaining the meeting house and grounds. The Orthodox Friends met in private homes until their meeting house was erected in 1830. The new meeting house followed the Buckingham model. This was later sold and renovated for use as the Lahaska Fire House.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

A. Early Views:

1. Friends Historical Library, Meeting House Photograph Collection, Buckingham Meeting House; file of historic views, without sources or date (probably late nineteenth century); view of south front and west side; view of east side; perspective view of south front (with Friends in period clothing).

B. Interviews:

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PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION:

The documentation of the Buckingham Friends Meeting House was undertaken during the summer of 1997 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 architect Roger Miller, and architectural technicians Christy Bernard, Pamela Howell, Kevin J. Lam and Adam Maksay (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.