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## Mt. Pleasant Church, Conewago Township

### **Abstract**

About two miles south of McSherrystown and a similar distance southwest of Hanover, in Conewago Township, lies the small village of Mt. Pleasant. The community developed at and near the intersection of State Route 194, commonly called the Hanover-Littlestown Pike, and Legislative Route 01005, known in days past as the road from McSherrystown to Gitt's Mill and its segment south of the intersection called in recent times Narrow Drive. In the eastern quadrant of the intersection, a church was built in 1878; nearby and adjacent to the crossroads sat a public school, which had been built sometime before 1858. The school was known by two names, Mt. Pleasant and Schwartz's, and the village itself was also called by some people Schwartz's or Schwartz's Schoolhouse. Further, like the church, the school had religious significance to residents of the vicinity. [*excerpt*]

### **Keywords**

Adams County Historical Society, ACHS, Adams County, Pennsylvania History, Mt. Pleasant, Mount Pleasant

# MT. PLEASANT CHURCH, CONEWAGO TOWNSHIP

By Larry C. Bolin

## Preface

*Late in the summer of 2004, staff members of the Adams County Historical Society were presented with questions concerning the "Mt. Pleasant Lutheran Church" and shown a deed in which such a church is named. Since no one on the staff could answer the questions to the satisfaction of the patron, and since the society had no unimpeachable evidence readily available that a church of that name ever existed, or did not exist, in the county, it was determined that an investigation should begin, the goal of which was to uncover, within reason, sufficient irreproachable evidence of the correct identity of the church that future misunderstanding might be prevented. It was thought that the society's own resources and perhaps those of similar nearby societies likely could provide what was sought. At that point, Dr. Charles H. Glatfelter and this writer began an in-depth search for factual information relating to that church. This article, then, discusses in some detail our findings.*

*The range of source materials consulted includes newspaper announcements; church, land, tax, and census records; county and church histories; city directories; personal recollections. Research sites or depositories of materials used were the Adams County Historical Society, the Adams County Courthouse, the Abdel R. Wentz Library of the Lutheran Theological Seminary, all Gettysburg; the York Historic Trust Library, York; the Pennsylvania Room of the Hanover Public Library, Hanover; the Special Collections Library, Albright College, Reading. Other materials used are privately held.*

*Acknowledgment must be given to those people who made available some information which appears in this report. Wendy Bish-McGrew and Austin Ruth receive our thanks for providing details found in the Pennsylvania Room and in the St. Mark's Church minutes. Sidney Dreese, Special Collections Librarian at Albright, sent much clarifying information on local Evangelical churches and ministers and has earned our particular gratitude.*

*Larry C. Bolin  
Hanover, Pennsylvania  
January 2005 Revised  
August 2005*

About two miles south of McSherrystown and a similar distance southwest of Hanover, in Conewago Township, lies the small village of Mt. Pleasant. The community developed at and near the intersection of State Route 194, commonly called the Hanover-Littlestown Pike, and Legislative Route 01005, known in days past as the road from McSherrystown to Gitt's Mill and its segment south of the intersection called in

recent times Narrow Drive. In the eastern quadrant of the intersection, a church was built in 1878; nearby and adjacent to the crossroads sat a public school, which had been built sometime before 1858. The school was known by two names, Mt. Pleasant and Schwartz's, and the village itself was also called by some people Schwartz's or Schwartz's Schoolhouse. Further, like the church, the school had religious significance to residents of the vicinity.

The date of the initial acquisition of land for the school is not known – no deed was recorded. Nevertheless, the size of the school lot, undoubtedly as it first existed, is defined, although perhaps not well, in a deed recording the sale of nearly 200 acres of land by John Schwartz to Samuel Schwartz in 1865.<sup>1</sup> The deed description of the land being sold indicates a roughly rectangular area of about 5.1 by 8.1 perches, surely the school property, intruding into the larger tract along its northeastern side and adjoining land of Jacob Keller's heirs. Not until 1902 did the township's school directors enlarge the grounds by purchasing from the estate of Samuel Schwartz an additional rectangular plot 6.25 by 6.95 perches, in area 43.5 square perches, adjacent to the southwestern side of the existing lot.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, the remaining part of Samuel Schwartz's real estate, still nearly 200 acres, was bought by Samuel L. Johns.<sup>3</sup> The deed of Johns's acquisition shows a cutout portion, the just-enlarged school lot, of about 6.25 by 11.5 perches, thus delineating the new total area of the school property. But by 1959, when the school directors, after a centralized elementary school was built for township students, sold the property to R. H. Sheppard, it was shown to be an apparently irregular quadrilateral, its sides approximately 8.8, 11.5, 7.8, and 8.8 perches, with an area of 95 square perches.<sup>4</sup>

The lengths of the sides of the school lot, and their courses, are not often in agreement from deed to deed. Apparent error is most glaring in the 1959 deed, for a draft using the deed numbers clearly will not close correctly. Thus, uncertainty about the exact size and shape of the lot remains. A comparison of all cited deeds, however, seems to permit a juggling of the numbers that will show a lot of 80 square perches, a half-acre, with sides of about 6.95 and 11.5 perches set at 90° angles. The school and its yard are still on site and it is presumed that present boundaries must closely approximate those of 1902, so even now an accurate reading is certainly possible.

Schwartz's school played a role in the community's religious endeavors even during the church's presence in Mt. Pleasant. Formalized religious activity in the village, and in the schoolhouse, however, began before the church appeared, although the exact nature and range of devotional pursuits there are not known.

In mid-autumn 1877, a newspaper announcement told that the building of a church was planned for the next summer on Henry Ramer's land, near Schwartz's school in Conewago Township, for the use of Lutherans and other denominations.<sup>5</sup> Those plans did not materialize in their entirety as reported, however. Even though a church was erected near the school the next year, it was not on Ramer land and it did not have, as the news item seemingly implies, Lutherans as primary builders or occupiers, although they might have had some immediate use of it.

Before any word of the actual building of a church, however, a news item related that "Swartz's Sunday-school in Union [sic] Twp., Adams Co., will hold their annual



picnic in the grove at the school-house in which the Sunday-school meets.”<sup>6</sup> That item suggests that the Sunday school, and perhaps other aspects of organized religion, had existed in Mt. Pleasant for some time, perhaps years, prior to 1878. Were Lutherans, who nine months earlier had reported plans to erect a church, involved in conducting the Sunday school at Schwartz’s, perhaps already working in conjunction with people from one or more other denominations?

Then on October 2, 1878, Mary Weisensale, widow of Christian G., late of Conewago Township, and other heirs of Christian G., sold for \$20 to Menases Bollinger, Oxford Township, Conrad Bender, Mt. Pleasant Township, and Edward Stover, Heidelberg Township, trustees, and their successors in office, a lot of ground in Conewago Township “in trust to be kept and maintained as a place of Divine worship by the ministry and membership of the Evangelical Association of North America.” A further directive in the deed was that members of all denominations may use the house of worship for funeral services.<sup>7</sup>

Menases (or Manasseh) Bollinger, born circa 1841, lived in West Manheim Township in 1870, according to federal census records, and is found on tax rolls of Oxford Township 1872-1880, after which nothing more on him has surfaced. He married Esther Garber, who died in 1902 and was buried in the New Oxford Cemetery, where his name, but no other information, also appears on a grave marker.<sup>8</sup>

Conrad Bender lived in Mt. Pleasant Township 1865-1884, taxed at first on 110, later on 98, acres. In and after 1885, his heirs were taxed on the property.<sup>9</sup>

No sign of an Edward Stover who lived in 1878 in Heidelberg Township has been found. He does not appear in 1880 federal census records for Hanover or any nearby township.<sup>10</sup>

The Evangelical Association of North America was also known early in its life, and still to some in 1878, as Albright’s church, for its founder, Jacob Albright. Care should be taken to correctly distinguish that denomination from any other which used/uses Evangelical as part of its name; especially in the case of Mt. Pleasant, known to have had Lutheran activity in its church, the Evangelical Church should never be thought to be the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The Evangelical Association did undergo changes, including name changes, as time went on, some of which will be discussed briefly below. Evangelicals began to lose their separate identity when in 1946 they joined with members of the already closely allied United Brethren in Christ Church to form what often is called simply the EUB Church, members of which in turn in 1968 combined with Methodists, with whom they had always been in agreement on church doctrine and polity, to establish the present United Methodist Church.

The purchase of land for a church by the Evangelical trustees was a foregone conclusion and already known to the public for at least a few days prior to the transaction, for late in September a news item noted that the laying of the cornerstone of the church, along with appropriate services, would occur on October 13. A similar message was printed a week later.<sup>11</sup>

The lot of ground on which the church was to be built was described in the deed as beginning at a public road, then running along land of Samuel E. Keller south 39.25° east 5 perches, then by land of the heirs of Christian Weisensale south 47° west 5.6

perches to the public road, then along the road and land of Samuel Schwartz north 7.5° east 7.6 perches to the place of beginning, containing 16 square perches and being part of the land Samuel and Maria Schwartz had sold to Christian Weisensale on March 5, 1857.

The triangular plot on which the church was built was small. Put in a perhaps more easily grasped context, its sides were 82.5, 92.4, and 125.4 feet in length and its area was equivalent to a square just 66 by 66 feet or a rectangle 33 by 132 feet – 33 feet is now usually the minimum permissible width of a building lot in urban settings. Having a building that occupied nearly a quarter of the total area of its grounds did not allow much room for practical considerations, such as space for horses and buggies, a well, or outhouses, nor for aesthetic touches. And surely the lot was too small to include a burial grounds. A still clearer idea of how small the church tract was might be gained by envisioning it in comparison with the Schwartz's schoolgrounds. The church property was certainly less than half the size of the original school lot and just one-fifth, or even one-sixth, the size of the lot as it is today.

A draft of the church lot and the school properties, along with several adjacent tracts, is hereto attached to show their relative locations, since the church grounds, which abutted modern Narrow Drive, no longer exists as a separate tract. Included is a copy of a modern draft on which can still be discerned, but barely, the church land.

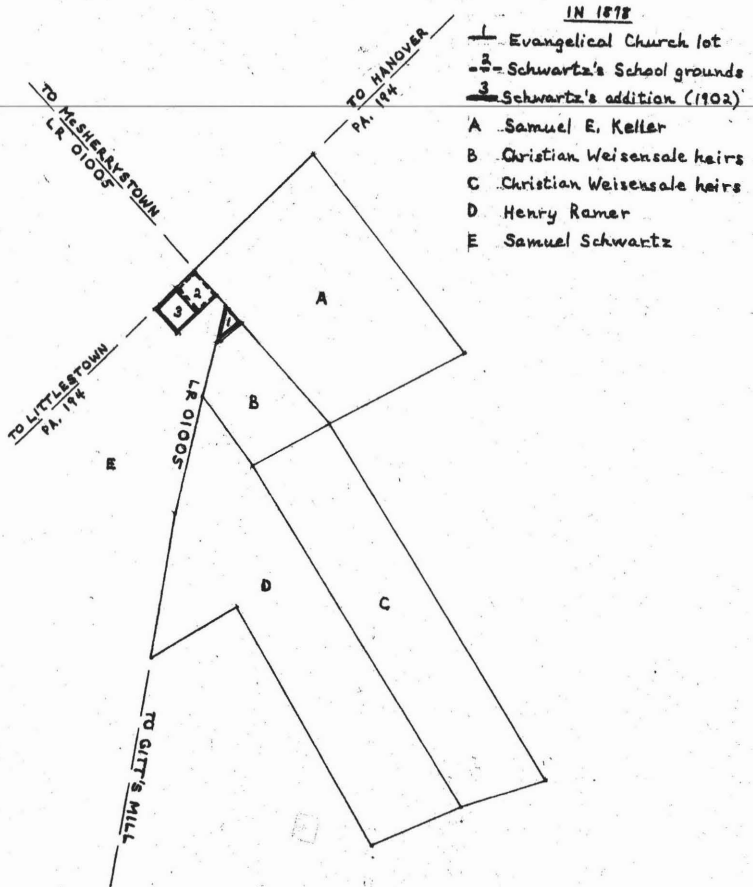
Clearly, the church was erected without appreciable delay, for early in December came the announcement of the dedication, scheduled for Christmas day, of the new "Mount Pleasant Evangelical Church, at Swartz's school-house." There would be services in English and in German, and "Revs. Wallace, Aurand and Buck" were expected to be present. A slightly abbreviated report of the upcoming dedication was also published just four days before its planned occurrence.<sup>12</sup>

In March 1878, the Central Pennsylvania Conference of the Evangelical Association had held its annual sessions, scheduled for that year in Glen Rock, York County. Newspaper accounts of those meetings included listings of ministers appointed to specific sites by the conference's stationing committee. Recorded were the placements of W. N. Wallace in Dillsburg, S. Aurand in York, and H.W. Buck in Glen Rock.<sup>13</sup> Surely, they are the three ministers who were expected to attend (and possibly conduct?) the church dedication at Mt. Pleasant.

William Nevin Wallis (the correct spelling of his surname), 1848-1922, was licensed to preach in 1870, but actually began his Evangelical ministry in 1873 at Bendersville, Adams County. He was ordained a deacon in 1875 and an elder in 1877. In a fifty-year ministry he served at many places, including, in Adams and York Counties, the aforementioned Dillsburg and Bendersville, and, in addition, New Freedom, Yoe, and Freysville.<sup>14</sup>

Simon Aurand, 1827-1909, became an itinerant Evangelical preacher in 1856, a deacon in 1858, and an elder in 1860. He also served for nearly fifty years, experiencing more than twenty changes of appointment. In Adams and York Counties he served Gettysburg, Shrewsbury, York, Loganville, and Hanover.<sup>15</sup> While ministering at Hanover in 1898, his post office address was recorded as Heller. A post office in York County with the name Heller existed only from 1887 to 1903, after which time mail

MOUNT PLEASANT PROPERTIES,  
WITH CHURCH AND SCHOOL  
(APPROXIMATION)





service to the former Heller area was via Hanover. Nonetheless, a 1911 map of York County still recognized the name Heller and placed it at or near Blooming Grove, in Penn Township.<sup>16</sup>

Henry William Buck, 1843-1916, was born into an Evangelical home, the son of Rev. Thomas Buck. He was licensed to preach in 1863 and became an itinerant the following year, then was named a deacon in 1866 and an elder in 1868. He was elected a presiding elder three times, in 1887, in 1891, and in an undetermined year; his office in 1891 oversaw the York District. In York County he served Glen Rock and New Freedom. He died in York, after ministering at least sixteen sites in forty-four years.<sup>17</sup>

There can be no doubt that the announced dedicatory service was held as scheduled, nor question that the Mt. Pleasant Evangelical Church was added to the Dillsburg Circuit. It was reported at the beginning of February 1879 that a "protracted meeting" was in progress in the new church, which was crowded each night, with much interest apparent. "Rev. Wallace of East Berlin" was in charge of those gatherings.<sup>18</sup>

The name W. N. Wallace is found in tax records of Hamilton Township, in which East Berlin lies, only in 1879; neither his full name nor his profession is shown, however. Nevertheless, the given tax information probably surely, even if not entirely accurately, identifies him as the same Rev. William Nevin Wallis noted above, who was stationed on the Dillsburg Circuit for 1877-1878 and so still at that appointment in February 1879. In the next month, however, he was assigned to Dushore in the Lewisburg District.<sup>19</sup>

Protracted meetings, or revivals, are in some aspects analogous to camp meetings, but restricted to a single congregation and not having its participants living at a campsite for the entire length of what often were many days of evangelizing. Protracted meetings were a series of usually evening sessions in a church, intended not only to re-strengthen members' zeal but also to enlist new members to the Evangelical message. Such gatherings were a major recruiting method in that church.<sup>20</sup>

But, after that early-1879 revival, the church received no mention in newspapers in the next fifteen months, nor did it in fourteen consecutive months in 1884-1885 and five more months in 1889-1890.<sup>21</sup> Is it possible that regular church activity ceased so soon after the church was dedicated or that no consistency in holding services ever really developed? Or, might the church simply have escaped newspaper notice? Later events show that the church did live on for some years, although apparently in financial difficulty which was either so long-standing or suddenly so overwhelming that it became impractical to continue the church/congregation.

During those times when there was no word of Mt. Pleasant Evangelical Church, however, the papers did occasionally carry items concerning a Sunday school in the village. In the summer of 1884, there appeared a report of a Sunday school celebration and in the spring of 1885 one of a Sunday school's organization.<sup>22</sup> In both instances, the terminology used was "Mt. Pleasant Union Sunday-school." Is the designation as union again a hint of Lutheran involvement? With whom? Was that the same Sunday school which predated the church? If so, the use of the word "organization" in the 1885 report is misleading; it should not be understood to mean establishment. Rather, it would refer to a regular, perhaps annual, selection of officers and should be termed reorganization.



Soon after those news items were printed, the 1886 *History of Cumberland and Adams Counties, Pennsylvania* was published. In the Adams County section of that book appears a seemingly direct statement that already Mt. Pleasant Evangelicals had lost their church. On page 233 is this sentence: "The Lutheran and Union Church, near Schwartz's School-house, was built in 1878." Suggested at the very least is a greatly diminished role for Evangelicals in their own church by 1886 and apparently some sort of takeover of the building by Lutherans and perhaps others. Might it actually only acknowledge, however, known Lutheran activity in the community, conceivably even in the church? Or, might it simply be based on the same type of misinformation which is evident on page 308 of the same history, where the Bendersville Evangelical Church is called Evangelical Lutheran?

In early spring, 1890, "Mount Pleasant Sunday-school was re-organized."<sup>23</sup> Although not called union on that occasion, it appears to have been the same entity as the one noted five years previously because several of the named officers in 1890 were repeats from 1885. Nevertheless, it remains unclear whether Evangelicals were part of the union effort and whether their church was the site of Sunday school classes and meetings during those years. It is known, however, that Evangelicals strongly favored Sunday schools as a teacher of Evangelical history and as a builder of faith in Evangelical tenets.<sup>24</sup>

In the first week of March 1893, the 54th annual sessions of the Central Pennsylvania Conference of the Evangelical Association were held at Milton, Northumberland County. Proceedings of those sessions include a summary of problems afflicting the Mt. Pleasant congregation (by then a part of the Hanover Mission), which removes some of the mystery of the situation up to that point, and the recommended resolution. There was a debt of \$102 on the church; only three families belonged to the church, all of whom lived nearer to Hanover than to the church; prospects for the church's future did not appear to merit special efforts to save it; there were at the time twelve acknowledged Evangelicals living in Hanover, several others having already left because there was no church there. The Quarterly Conference asked permission to move Mt. Pleasant Church to Hanover or to sell the building and, after paying the debt, to apply the remaining money to the acquisition of a lot for a church in Hanover. That request was granted.

The problems of maintaining a viable congregation at Mt. Pleasant may have had underlying causes outside as well as within the Evangelical Association, contriving to make continuation there impossible. Elements of one or both might have led to a drop in membership beyond recovery.

Nationally, the economic situation was unsettled. A severe depression struck in 1893 and lasted for several years. The Mt. Pleasant Evangelicals likely would have felt the pinch on their financial capabilities, which perhaps deprived them of the means to support the church at a level necessary for survival.

Already brewing for some years in the Evangelical Association was what had begun as honest debate over the acceptable degree of episcopal power in the church, but which had degenerated into personal clashes, with each side having its loyal adherents. By 1887 discord had reached such a level that two church bodies, each claiming to act for the entire church, announced the site of the next general conference – the

majority group, representing roughly two-thirds of the total membership, chose Indianapolis, while the minority picked Philadelphia. And there was a general conference in each city in 1891, signaling to all that feelings had hardened and the division was real. The Evangelical Association was in serious trouble. Had the split affected the Mt. Pleasant congregation directly, with some members leaving?

Civil court cases ensued and in October 1894 the Pennsylvania Supreme Court declared that the majority, as represented at the 1887 general conference and at Indianapolis in 1891, was the actual Evangelical Association. Further, the court ruled that Evangelical church properties in Pennsylvania belonged to the majority. Almost immediately, steps to a total split in the church began – although operating separately since the Philadelphia general conference, the minority had not organized themselves independent of the Evangelical Association. The division, even though real since 1891, had not yet been formally concluded.

Just nine days after the court's decision, the East Pennsylvania Conference, part of the minority, met in Reading and constituted themselves the East Pennsylvania Conference of the United Evangelical Church, keeping also the principles adopted at Philadelphia in 1891. In the next four weeks, the Central Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Oregon Conferences also organized as United Evangelical; in addition, a new body, the Pittsburgh Conference, was established, also United Evangelical. At the end of November, delegates of those groups convened in Naperville, Illinois, and organized as the first General Conference of the United Evangelical Church. The division of one church into two had been accomplished.<sup>25</sup> Thus, from late November 1894 Mt Pleasant Church, as part of the Central Pennsylvania Conference and aligned with the minority, was United Evangelical and no longer in the Evangelical Association. Any dissenters of the United Evangelical viewpoint at Mt. Pleasant, if any still remained, very likely would have left the congregation at that point.

For most members, the break in the church was not permanent. Eventually, because that which tended to unite as Evangelicals overrode that which tended to divide, the two bodies again came to agreement and in 1922 merged, renaming themselves the Evangelical Church.<sup>26</sup> Even then, though, a small minority, perhaps seven percent, again led by the East Pennsylvania Conference, balked at the merger and formed their own church, the Evangelical Congregational Church.<sup>27</sup> By then, however, the Mt. Pleasant United Evangelical congregation was no longer a distinct entity, having faded into oblivion after their church was sold.

Perhaps it should not be surprising to learn that Mt. Pleasant was not the only Evangelical congregation in the county in desperate trouble at that time. An uncannily similar situation appeared in the Emanuel Evangelical Church in Kingsdale, Germany Township. In 1888, 39 square perches of land in Kingsdale had been purchased for the use of the Evangelical Association of North America, on which property a 28 by 40 feet church was then built.<sup>28</sup> Just six years later, the proceedings of the 1894 annual sessions of the Central Pennsylvania Conference included the request by the Hanover Quarterly Conference (by 1892 at the latest, Kingsdale was on the Hanover Mission<sup>29</sup>) to sell the church, and the approval granted. In early September 1894, it was reported that the church, which had recently been sold at Sheriff's sale to S.J. Renner, had been resold by Renner to George F. Krug for the Lutherans of Kingsdale.<sup>30</sup> Another

article three months later related that the General Secretary of the Lutheran Board of Church Extension had purchased the building, which for the time being would be a mission of St. John's Church, Littlestown; St. John's pastor, Rev. Wire, would supply preaching at the Kingsdale church. The church was to be renovated the next year and dedicated as Lutheran.<sup>31</sup> But, although the church is mentioned in the 1895 minutes of the West Pennsylvania Synod of the Lutheran Church, the plans apparently fell through and no fully organized Kingsdale Lutheran congregation ever came into being.

William Curtis Wire was born in 1839 in Loudoun County, Virginia. In 1887, he was named pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran congregation, Littlestown, where he remained until 1892, when he left the area. In the next year, however, he returned to Littlestown as pastor at St. John's, which position he held until his death on April 20, 1897. His body was taken to his hometown, Lovettsville, Virginia, for burial.<sup>32</sup>

Apparently, despite the 1893 request by the quarterly conference to fold the Mt. Pleasant Church, and approval given, a strong desire to continue it existed, and held sway for a while, because in the latter half of 1895 the church once again received newspaper mention as an active concern, as will be seen below. In the interim, a Sunday school there frequently made the news, especially in 1895. In a sudden flurry of news reports it was usually called Mt. Pleasant or Schwartz's, and usually union, but in May 1895 an article announced that a "Sunday-school was organized in Mt. Pleasant Church at Schwartz's school-house."<sup>33</sup> Was that the same union Sunday school which met at the school? Again, the officials named in the article hint that that was the case. If so, they had begun to call themselves a church. Two perhaps less likely explanations do seem possible: "Schwartz's school-house" in the citation was meant as the alternative name of the town, or there were two distinct churches in Mt. Pleasant at the time.

What exactly was the relationship between church groups and public schools? In the later decades of the 1800s, frequent reports of Sunday schools meeting in Adams and York County public schoolhouses appeared in newspapers. Some of those Sunday schools were called union and it has been noticed that at times such cooperative efforts were between denominations which differed widely in their religious viewpoints and teachings, even to the point of open antagonism. The subject deserves consideration for a detailed investigation.

In late summer 1895 two items in the same Mt. Pleasant newsletter also suggest that two churches were considered to be operating there. One simply refers to Mt. Pleasant Church; the other says that Rev. Smith preached at "his" (quotation marks added) church the previous Sunday evening.<sup>34</sup>

Harris Smith was licensed as an Evangelical preacher in 1895.<sup>35</sup> Church records from the following March place his residence in Jacobus, York County.<sup>36</sup> A report from Mt. Pleasant a month after that reveals that he then lived, or was stationed, in Blooming Grove and, further, that he had recently "held divine services at Valentine Wildasin's" (residence in Mt. Pleasant).<sup>37</sup> Then in October an announcement of the upcoming "Third Quarterly Meeting of the United Evangelical Church of Hanover Mission" was published. (Although the Hanover Circuit had been established in 1886, there was no Evangelical church in the borough until 1902.) The meeting would be held at Blooming Grove. An invitation to attend was extended to all and the notice was signed by "H. Smith, pastor."<sup>38</sup>



It is significant that, although by 1896 the Evangelical church in Mt. Pleasant was no longer in Evangelical hands, clearly there were still people there who wished to attend Evangelical services. Moreover, since 1882 there was an Evangelical church in Blooming Grove, less than five miles distant,<sup>39</sup> and in the mid-1890s a minister at Blooming Grove willing to accommodate the Mt. Pleasant faithful.

Rev. Harris Smith was recorded early in 1898 as residing in Jacobus, then later that year as having Heller (Blooming Grove) as his post office address – the latter was during his circuit appointment at Hanover. After that, his whereabouts for nearly twenty years is unknown. He then is found living in York, appearing intermittently in city directories 1917-1932, called a laborer and a woodworker, his given name recorded at times as Harrison. In 1928, he was again, or still, listed in Evangelical church records as one of the “preachers on trial,” his residence York.<sup>40</sup>

Harris Smith’s preaching career began the same year the demise of Mt. Pleasant’s church as Evangelical occurred. For three consecutive weeks in the fall of 1895 the papers reported an ongoing revival in the Mt. Pleasant Evangelical Church. The first week’s item included an exhortation in Pennsylvania German, roughly translated as “Come back and help us.” The third of those reports contained word of a well-attended communion service the previous Sunday evening.<sup>41</sup> The revival was probably a last-ditch attempt to resuscitate the church. But news of the failure of the effort to prolong the church as Evangelical was printed even as the revival continued.

In mid-October 1895, for the first time, papers carried a listing of properties the sheriff would sell on November 9. They included “A LOT OF GROUND, situate in Conewago Township...containing sixteen (16) perches...of land, improved with a Frame Church 26 x 38 feet, Seized and taken into execution as the property of WILLIAM H. CROWL and WILLIAM BECKER, Trustees of Mountpleasant Church of Conewago township.”<sup>42</sup>

Little detail on William H. Crowl, 1845-1930, has been found. He died at the county home in York. His funeral service was conducted by Rev. Ellis James Bayne, pastor of Grace Evangelical Church, Hanover, after which he was buried in the cemetery of Christ Reformed Church, near Littlestown.<sup>43</sup>

It has proved impossible to isolate Evangelical trustee William Becker inasmuch as in the years 1894-1900 in Conewago Township alone, one, two, or even three individuals of that name were taxed each year.

A week after the sale by the sheriff of “Mt. Pleasant Evangelical Church at Schwartz’s school-house,” the transaction was reported to have been concluded to satisfy a judgment for \$140 held by F. S. Stover. Stover was the purchaser at \$150.<sup>44</sup> That newspaper article differs in some respects from information documented elsewhere.

In 1893, seen above, the church debt was said to be \$102, which appears to receive corroboration in a document in which the debt, with interest, is written as \$113.10.<sup>45</sup> That same document, however, records trustee William Becker’s surname as Beck – that version of the name is taken to be incorrect since no one of that name of a plausible age has been found in the area at the time. Lastly, the deed of sale by Sheriff William B. McIlhenny to Frederick S. Stover places the transaction four days later than the other sources.<sup>46</sup>

Frederick S. Stover, 1846-1917, lived in Heidelberg Township, near what then was known as York Road Station, which is the crossing of Pennsylvania Route 116 and the Western Maryland Railroad at the present Hanover Brands cannery, and therefore very near the Blooming Grove Evangelical Church. Himself Evangelical, Stover was a member of the Blooming Grove Church building committee in 1882 and was on other church committees afterward. By 1915 he had moved to York, where he died. His funeral service was held at his home, conducted by Rev. S. E. Koontz, pastor of St. Paul's United Evangelical Church, York, after which his body was taken to Hanover for burial in Mt. Olivet Cemetery.<sup>47</sup>

Stover's connection to the Mt. Pleasant congregation is not known, nor has a tie to 1878 trustee Edward Stover been found. Had he simply made a loan to fellow Evangelicals and now was seeking to recoup his investment? He did eventually realize a profit of just over \$158.

Stover did not hold the church property for long. At the end of 1895 he sold it for \$195 to William Sheaffer, Michael Etzler, and George Eckert, Lutheran representatives, and Albert Sheaffer, Henry Schmuck, and Samuel Schwartz, representatives of the Reformed denomination.<sup>48</sup> With the church no longer in Evangelical control, other denominations apparently began to use it with more frequency – before long, evidence began to mount that both Lutheran and Reformed people were gathering at the church and that changes to the church were being considered.

In the middle of February 1896 it was announced that Rev. G. B. Resser of Hanover would hold divine services in the church the next day. That was George B. Resser of Emanuel Reformed Church, Hanover. In the same issue was noted talk of placing a tower and bell on the church, which was deemed a good idea.<sup>49</sup>

Two weeks later, it was reported that Rev. Mr. Stock of Hanover would preach at the church the following day. That was Charles M. Stock, pastor of St. Mark's Lutheran congregation, Hanover.<sup>50</sup>

In two more weeks there appeared a news item which, although it did not specifically say at the church, told that Rev. E. D. Miller of Hanover would hold divine services in Mt. Pleasant the next day. Edward Miller at the time was minister of Reformed congregations at Sherman's and St. Bartholomew's Churches, both in West Manheim Township, York County.<sup>51</sup>

Then in mid-April the first of two very similar informative, yet at the same time confusing, news items was printed; the second followed a week later. They told of the organization of a Union Sunday school "at Mt. Pleasant Reformed Church at Schwartz's school-house," with an added statement of the presence of both Revs. Stock and Resser.<sup>52</sup> Those items are the first which directly indicate a united Lutheran-Reformed effort at Mt. Pleasant and the first to say that the church was considered to be Reformed (by some people, at least). Also, it is not clear whether the articles mean to impart that Schwartz's school was the home of the church or only that the organizational meeting was held at the school. Or, might the cited phrase, in fact, be one more case of using the school name to indicate the town name?

In mid-July, both Rev. E. D. Miller and Rev. M. J. Roth of Hanover held services in Mt. Pleasant. The latter was Marsby J. Roth of Trinity Reformed Church, Hanover.<sup>53</sup>

By mid-autumn 1896, the apparently unrestricted use of the Mt. Pleasant Church for Reformed services ended. On November 5, the six representatives (trustees) who had acquired the church property the previous December sold it for \$195, the same amount it had cost them, to E. H. Hostetter, trustee of St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover.<sup>54</sup> At that point a Lutheran congregation became in reality the owner of the Mt. Pleasant Church. Just over a week later, news of the sale included a brief summary of the church's history. Added too were statements that preaching would be provided once a month until residents of the vicinity were able to support their own pastor and that a member of St. Mark's congregation would be chosen to conduct a Sunday school at Mt. Pleasant.<sup>55</sup>

There may have followed some movement toward a self-sustaining Lutheran congregation in Mt. Pleasant, although it appears that any real effort to keep the promise of continuing Lutheran activity alive there was feeble and sporadic, negating the chances for the Lutheran body to grow and become independent of outside support. Prospects of a successful Lutheran congregation developing in Mt. Pleasant seem to have been less than propitious in 1896. There were already three Lutheran churches in Hanover and one in McSherrystown, all within an acceptable distance for most Mt. Pleasant area residents. At roughly twice the distance were two more churches in Littlestown and one in West Manheim Township, those perhaps easier to attend for people to the west and south of the majority of the Mt. Pleasant populace. As time went on, slow advancement or stagnation of the Lutheran effort would have hurt any chance of a viable congregation, especially as travel became easier and faster.

Just two instances of intended Lutheran preaching at Mt. Pleasant made the news in 1897, both early in the year. Rev. Charles M. Stock, St. Mark's pastor, was expected to, and probably did, speak on the Sundays following those announcements.<sup>56</sup> A check of the papers through the rest of 1897 and seven more consecutive months of issues in 1903-1904 uncovered no more reports of Lutheran preaching in Mt. Pleasant.<sup>57</sup>

But, particularly during the year 1897, news concerning Sunday school in Mt. Pleasant was published more frequently than about the church, although not always in words consistent enough for real clarity. Three items point out the difficulty in being certain of the intended meaning. In May 1897 the organization of a Sunday school was said to have occurred at "the Mt. Pleasant Church, near Schwartz's school-house." That August, "Mt. Pleasant Union Sunday-school" was named. Then on the day after Christmas, 1903, there appeared a reference to "Swartz's Sunday-school," adding to the befuddlement.<sup>58</sup> Was the same Sunday school meant in all of the reports? Or might there have been two conducted concurrently?

Other than a union Sunday school with Lutheran co-management and the two instances of Lutheran preaching given above, no direct evidence of any kind of Lutheran religious activity in Mt. Pleasant during the church's ownership by St. Mark's congregation has been found. Was the church ever organized as Lutheran? Was a wider range of pastoral acts performed, if indeed any ever were? Minutes of St. Mark's Church are almost silent about the Mt. Pleasant Church, and yet do hint at possible activity, however infrequent it might have been, to the end. The scant information in those minutes reveals that in 1913 the congregation wanted to sell the church, that in

1923 they paid an insurance premium on it, and that in 1927, at which time there were only "6 or 7 members left in the congregation," they sold the church and land to Howard Martin for \$200.

It is true that the Mt. Pleasant Church was considered by many, especially during the tenure of St. Mark's congregation as owner, to be Lutheran and it was commonly called Lutheran. In addition to the documented instances above, a number of deeds relating to properties adjoining or including the church land frequently use the terminology "now or formerly Mt. Pleasant Lutheran Church."<sup>59</sup> But it is also true that often the wording in deeds, correct or not, is simply copied into ensuing deeds without regard for past or current realities, so an inaccuracy might be repeated again and again.

In the final analysis it is not easy to call the Mt. Pleasant Church anything more than informally Lutheran. There is no evidence of a fully organized Lutheran congregation, no evidence of a church council or of church record-keeping. Neither is there mention at any time of a Mt. Pleasant Church or congregation in the minutes of the West Pennsylvania Synod of the Lutheran Church, in which the existence and legitimacy, if real, would have been recorded.

The church property was sold on March 19, 1927, by St. Mark's to Howard Martin of Penn Township.<sup>60</sup> The deed mentions the presence of the church building and includes a restriction of use, accepted by Martin, that "said property is to be used for religious purposes only." Both the existence of the church and the same condition of restricted use are again written into the deed of sale of the property by Martin over a decade and a half later. There can be little doubt, however, that by then the church had been removed.

Useful details were elicited in telephone conversations during October 2004 with three individuals with lifetimes of memories of Mt. Pleasant. Earl Teal, Hanover Pike, Hanover, has no memory of any building on the church site, nor can he recall any talk of a church ever being in Mt. Pleasant. But when told where the church had sat, he immediately spoke of "the Amos Carbaugh place nearby." Roger Toomey, Mt. Pleasant Road, Hanover, has what he termed a possible memory, admittedly very dim: "don't remember a church, but believe I recall a building was there – let's put it that way. But it had to be seventy years ago." He too cannot recall talk of a church. Charles Carbaugh, Narrow Drive, Hanover, is much surer of his memories. While he also has no personal memory of a building, he volunteered its location correctly and is "sure a church was there" and "sure it was removed no later than about 1935." Actually, he thinks "the church was taken down maybe before 1930 by Martin" – he hesitated in trying to recall Martin's given name. He remembers hearing that "Martin used the wood from the church to build a shed or something at his place on I think Beck Mill Road – times were tough and you didn't waste anything useful." He also recalls hearing his parents and his grandfather speak of the church, but "don't believe much went on there, except maybe Sunday school." He remembers that "when old enough to drive a tractor, I turned up big flat stones near the bend (in the road) when plowing; my grandfather said they were from the church foundation."

Questions posed to the men were few, as were comments inserted during their discourses, the latter only to seek clarity, to indicate understanding, or to redirect them to

the subject. All things considered, the memories of all three were given in assertive, unhesitating voices. Unsolicited, each claimed recollection back to the mid-1930s. It is hard to accept that, if the church was still standing during World War II, as the deed of Martin's disposal of the property states, none of the three would have retained some memory of it. It seems safe to say, therefore, that indeed Martin was responsible for its removal. Although it is difficult to get a clear idea of the time of the church's dismantling, it is plausible, and probably likely, that by the mid-thirties it was gone.

Howard Martin sold the church tract for \$1 on December 4, 1943, to husband and wife Curvin Calvin Carbaugh and Mary V. Carbaugh.<sup>61</sup> To repeat the by then all but certain inaccuracy in the deed, the tract was said to be improved with a frame church and was to be restricted to religious use. Subsequent changes of possession of the church lot follow a more difficult path.

An involved series of events which culminated in the next sale of the church land is recorded in the deed of that transaction.<sup>62</sup> The deed relates that by the time Dale L. Gerber acquired the lot from the Curvin C. Carbaugh estate, the 16-square perch tract had been swallowed by adjacent land. A recital of Carbaugh family possession of the property reveals that in 1889 Elizabeth and Sarah Keller sold to Amos Carbaugh a tract of 9 acres 46 square perches along the Littlestown-Hanover Pike in the village of Mt. Pleasant in Conewago Township.<sup>63</sup> After selling portions of that tract, Amos Carbaugh died on February 6, 1905, leaving a will by which he devised his real estate to his son, Curvin C. Carbaugh.<sup>64</sup> As seen above, in 1943 Curvin C. Carbaugh added to his holdings by purchasing from Howard Martin the small triangular church lot, which lay along the southwestern side of his other land. On July 26, 1967, Curvin died (his wife having died some years before), leaving a will by which he directed his executors to make a public or private sale.<sup>65</sup> The executors, his son Amos S. Carbaugh and his daughter Catharine V. Duttera, sold the real estate on October 21, 1967, for \$5,400 to Dale L. Gerber, mentioned above. The property totaled 3.8762 acres, according to a September 29, 1967, draft by J. W. Rife "showing all the land of said Curvin C. Carbaugh estate." By the time of Gerber's purchase, the deed of sale no longer contained any word of a church or of restricted use.

Later, the former lot of 16 square perches underwent a division as the larger property of which it had become a part was itself partitioned along different lines. On March 7, 1985, Dale L. Gerber and wife Wandalee L. Gerber sold to Donald J. Schriver and wife Dee L. Schriver land which included part of the 16 square perches.<sup>66</sup> Then, on July 30, 1986, Dale L. Gerber and wife Wanda Gerber sold to Patrick J. Rineman and wife Deborah A. Rineman a tract which contained the remainder of the 16 square perches.<sup>67</sup> Together, those transactions show that the triangular old church lot had become additions, now in part driveways, to existing neighboring residential properties.

Finally, on February 5, 1996, the Schriver's property became solely the possession of Dee L. Schriver.<sup>68</sup>

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> *Adams County Deed Book X*, 449.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 224, 504.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 58, 398.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 226, 36.
- <sup>5</sup> *Hanover Herald*, November 10, 1877.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, August 10, 1878.
- <sup>7</sup> *Deed Book HH*, 75.
- <sup>8</sup> Adams County Historical Society card file, census and tax records.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>11</sup> *Herald*, September 28 and October 5, 1878.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, December 7 and 21, 1878.
- <sup>13</sup> *Glen Rock Item*, March 15, and *Herald*, March 16, 1878.
- <sup>14</sup> J. D. Shortess and A. D. Gramley, historians, *History of the Central Pennsylvania Conference of the Evangelical Church, 1839-1939* (Harrisburg, PA: 1940), pp. 60, 106, 112, 115; L. M. Dice, ed., *Minutes of the Eighty-Third Annual Session of the Central Pennsylvania Conference of the Evangelical Church* (Harrisburg, PA 1923), 78.
- <sup>15</sup> Shortess, pp. 34, 81, 84, 88; *Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Session of the Central Pennsylvania Conference of the United Evangelical Church (The Fifty-Ninth Session of the Conference)* (n. p., 1898), n. p.
- <sup>16</sup> John L. Kay and Chester M. Smith, *Pennsylvania Postal History* (Lawrence, MA, 1976), 366. The 1911 map is in the possession of Charles H. Glatfelter.
- <sup>17</sup> Shortess, 37, 97, 100, 103, 131, 137, 318.
- <sup>18</sup> *Herald*, February 1, 1879.
- <sup>19</sup> Tax lists of Hamilton Township 1878-1880, Adams County Historical Society; Shortess, 115, 117-8.
- <sup>20</sup> Raymond W. Albright, *A History of the Evangelical Church* (Harrisburg, PA 1942), 316.
- <sup>21</sup> *Herald*, February 1879-April 1880, March 1884-April 1885, December 1889-April 1890.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, August 2, 1884, and April 11, 1885.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, April 11, 1890.
- <sup>24</sup> Albright, 215-7 and 295-9.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 326-32.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 377-83.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 384.
- <sup>28</sup> *Deed Book SS*, 179.
- <sup>29</sup> I. C. Yeakel, ed., *Proceedings... Fifty-Third* (York, PA, 1892), 35.
- <sup>30</sup> *Gettysburg Star and Sentinel*, September 4, 1894.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, December 4, 1894.
- <sup>32</sup> Abdel R. Wentz Library, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, PA, card file; *Adams County Independent* (Littlestown), April 24, 1897.
- <sup>33</sup> *Herald*, May 4, 1895.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, September 14, 1895.



- <sup>35</sup> *Proceedings... Fourth*: "Roll and Directory of Ministers" (n. p., 1898), n. p.
- <sup>36</sup> U. F. Swengel, ed., *Proceedings... Second* (Williamsport, PA, 1896), 3.
- <sup>37</sup> *Herald*, April 11, 1896.
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, October 31, 1896; Shortess, 39, 214.
- <sup>39</sup> Franklin W. Zarfoss, "Blooming Grove United Evangelical Church" (1992), 1, York Historic Trust Library, York, PA.
- <sup>40</sup> *Proceedings... Fourth* (n. p., 1898), n. p.; York City Directory (1917, 1921, 1925-6, 1927-8, 1931-2); Walter J. Dice, ed., *Minutes... Eighty-Eighth* (Harrisburg, PA, 1928), n. p.
- <sup>41</sup> *Herald*, October 12, 19, and 26, 1895.
- <sup>42</sup> *Star and Sentinel*, October 15, 1895.
- <sup>43</sup> *Hanover Evening Sun*, November 15, 1930.
- <sup>44</sup> *Herald*, November 16, 1895.
- <sup>45</sup> *Sheriff's Execution Docket* 1894-1897, Prothonotary's Office, Adams County Court House, 241.
- <sup>46</sup> *Sheriff's Deed Book A*, Adams County Court House, p. 114, November 13, 1895.
- <sup>47</sup> *Herald*, March 21, 1917; Zarfoss, 1-3.
- <sup>48</sup> *Deed Book XX*, 600.
- <sup>49</sup> *Herald*, February 15, 1896.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, February 29, 1896.
- <sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, March 14, 1896.
- <sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, April 18 and 25, 1896.
- <sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, July 11, 1896.
- <sup>54</sup> *Deed Book XX*, 602.
- <sup>55</sup> *Herald*, November 14, 1896.
- <sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, February 20 and April 24, 1897.
- <sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, May-December 1897 and December 1903- June 1904.
- <sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, May 8 and August 14, 1897, and December 26, 1903.
- <sup>59</sup> See, for example, *Deed Books* 56, 555; 97, 173; 107, 172; and 178, 120.
- <sup>60</sup> *Deed Book* 117, 438.
- <sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 164, 66.
- <sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 266, 189.
- <sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, ZZ, 507.
- <sup>64</sup> Estate Papers of Amos Carbaugh, #8583, Adams County Historical Society.
- <sup>65</sup> Estate Papers of Curvin C. Carbaugh, #G-2630, Adams County Historical Society.
- <sup>66</sup> *Deed Book* 396, 684.
- <sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 432, 869.
- <sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 1151, 157.