

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC INDEPENDENT CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

AND/OR COMMON Unitarian Church of Meadville

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
346 Chestnut Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
24th

CITY, TOWN
Meadville

VICINITY OF
CODE
42

COUNTY
Crawford

CODE
039

STATE
Pennsylvania

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Unitarian Church (c/o Reverend Michael McGee)

STREET & NUMBER
346 Chestnut Street

CITY, TOWN
Meadville

VICINITY OF

STATE
Pennsylvania 16335

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Crawford County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER
903 Diamond Square

CITY, TOWN
Meadville

STATE
Pennsylvania 16335

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Places

DATE
4/19/77

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

CITY, TOWN
Harrisburg

STATE
Pennsylvania 17120

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Construction of the Independent Congregational (Unitarian) Church was begun in 1835 and completed in 1836. The building was designed by Captain George W. Cullum, a member of the congregation, who based his design on a Unitarian Church in Philadelphia. The church is basically a large squarish red brick building with a wooden Doric tetrastyle portico with a simple pediment.

The exterior presents an ordered and somewhat severe appearance. Ornamentation is confined to the pediment frieze and consists of a series of triglyphs with guttae. A series of rectangular mutules runs across the corona. The four supporting columns are well proportioned and of wood construction. The flush joints form a smooth surface to simulate masonry. Behind the columns of the porch is a very tall door approximates the proportion of door to columns as found in original Greek temples. Two square Doric pilasters are attached to the corners of the entrance facade. A series of four large rectangular windows runs along each side of the building. The windows are done in a scale and size to conform with the Doric columns of the portico. The rear of the building has a small shed roofed alcove and a small square attic level window.

The interior is somewhat lighter in detail than the outside. It nevertheless echoes the severity of the exterior with its restraint, its strong rectilinear emphasis, its Doric motif and its plain wooden box pews painted white. The ministers seat was located in the alcove which was framed by Doric pilasters with a full pediment. A gallery supported by three columns is located at the opposite end of the church.

Alterations to the church have been minimal. In 1887, the organ was moved from the gallery to the minister's alcove. Several minor changes in seating arrangements have also been made over the years. The building has recently been refurbished and is in an excellent state of preservation.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES 1836

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Edward Derby/
George W. Cullum

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Independent Congregational Church (Unitarian) of Meadville is an imposing example of Greek Revival architecture. Classical styles are skillfully employed in scale and design on both the exterior and interior of the building. The building was designed by Captain (later General) George W. Cullum, who also drew the plans for Ft. Sumter, South Carolina.

This church was the original source and main support of the Meadville Theological School founded in 1844. Its members gave the first money, building, land, his salary and were supportive of its students. It trained not only Unitarians, but Universalists, Christian and Evangelical-sect pastors in a period when such training was not generally available to them in Ohio, West Virginia, Western Pennsylvania, and Western New York state.

The founding of the congregation which built this church is dated at 1825. In a period of trinitarianism and religious absolutes, it was a bastion of "free thought"; for many years the only such church in the greater region. A prime mover in its establishment, H. J. Huidekoper, corresponded with the leaders of the church in the east, employed its young graduates as tutors and pastors for the first handful of members, published a periodical called the Essayist which later became the Western Messenger under Ephirin Peabody and James Freeman Clarke at Louisville. Although the church never boasted long membership roles, its influence on the opening frontier of the 1830's and 40's to the liberal tradition of thought is inestimable. Nearly every major figure associated with the trans-Appalachian here and visited here. Those few that did not were a part of the Huidekoper and Shippen families unparalleled correspondence. The influence of this church through support, education, publication, ever inter-marriage made its influence felt far beyond the confines of the region and tablets and memorials range from Chicago, to District of Columbia to Boston attesting its member's services to church and country.

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INDEPENDENT CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH - Crawford County

CONTINUATION SHEET

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Major Bibliographical References:

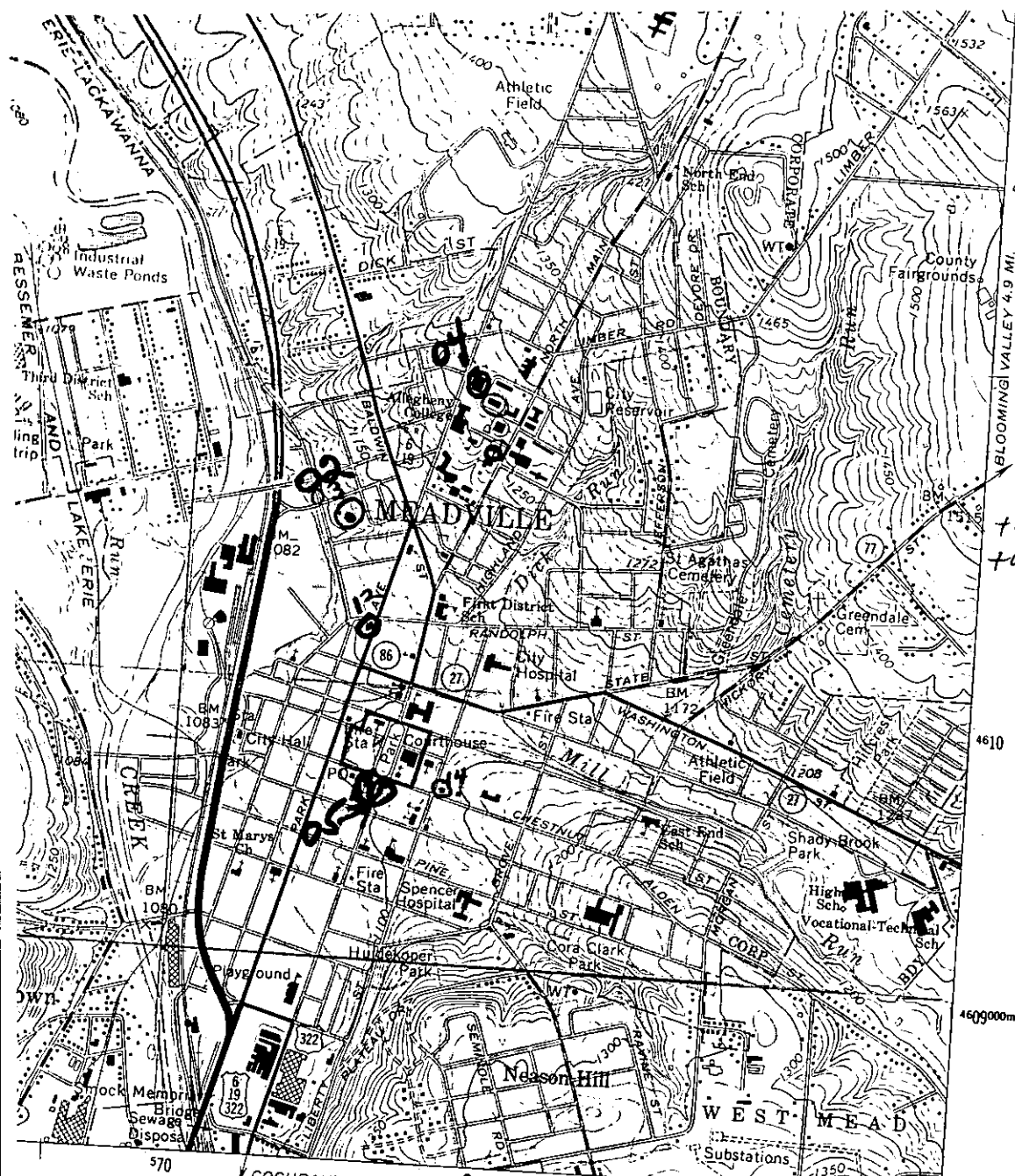
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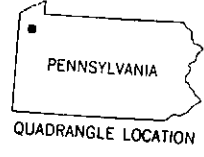
Lyttle, C. H. Freedom Moves West. Boston: 1952, p. 56.



* correct location for 'Independent Congregational Church' is in the red circle on the right 05

PSU GIS

msw 6/5/98



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, all weather, hard surface	Light-duty road, all weather, improved surface
Secondary highway, all weather, hard surface	Unimproved road, fair or dry weather

Interstate Route
 U. S. Route
 State Route

MEADVILLE, PA.

N4137.5—W8007.5/7.5

1968
 PHOTOREVISED 1973
 AMS 4967 II NW—SERIES V831

COCHRANTON 12 MI.
 FRANKLIN (U.S. 62) 28 MI.

INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA—1975
 572000m E

41°37'30"
 80°07'30"

(COCHRANTON)
 572000m E
 4967 II SE